AFRICA RECOVERY

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Secretary-General to present major report on achieving peace and economic growth

UN Security Council focuses spotlight on African conflicts

By **Margaret A. Novicki**

Calling for a "concerted international effort" to promote peace and security in Africa, the UN Security Council has asked Secretary-General Kofi Annan to develop a "comprehensive response" to the continent's conflicts and their aftermath. Meeting for the first time on Africa at the ministerial level, the Security Council on 25 September said the Secretary-General should present a report to the Council by February 1998 on how to better identify sources of conflict in Africa, how to prevent or resolve them and how, once they are over, to lay the foundation for peace and economic growth.

"We have dissected and debated Africa, and studied and summarized its challenges for decades," Secretary-General Annan told the meeting. "Now is the time for action."

While commending African countries for having made "significant strides" towards democratization, economic reform and protection of human rights, the Security Council expressed "grave concern" over the number and intensity of armed conflicts which "threaten regional peace, cause massive human dislocation and suffering, perpetuate instability and divert resources from long-term development."

Only the third time that the Security Council has ever met at the foreign minister level, the session also examined ways of strengthening collaboration between the UN and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on conflict prevention and resolution.

Initiated by the US, and chaired by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, the open meeting was attended by foreign ministers of the other four permanent and the 10 non-permanent members of the Security Council, as well as representatives of observer governments and UN agencies and organizations.

UN Photo/Eskinder

Secretary-General Kofi Annan, flanked by US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright (right), addresses the 25 September Security Council ministerial session. The US held the Council presidency that month.

In his speech, Secretary-General Annan acknowledged the consensus that the solution to Africa's problems rests "with Africans themselves." But this recognition also challenges the international community "to think precisely how best we can accompany the Africans on their path to lasting peace, stability, justice and sustainable development."

President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe, the current OAU Chairman, in turn noted that the session was being held against the backdrop of a "perceptible African renaissance, a rebirth and a renewal" which is reshaping not only African societies, but also Africa's relations with the rest of the world.

Many countries have adopted political and economic reforms, free and fair elections are being held and the continent is taking greater responsibility for the resolution of its crises, the OAU Chairman noted. In order to resolve conflicts, regional mechanisms have been activated, as well as the OAU itself, through the Central Organ of the Mechanism for Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution.

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Sharp fall in resource flows to Africa

Concessional loans from IMF and World Bank also plunge

By **Christina Katsouris**
Washington, DC

Net capital flows to African countries, including concessional aid, fell sharply last year although the continent recorded its strongest economic growth rate this decade. And with many African countries over-burdened by debt, progress has been slow in implementing the complicated relief package known as the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative. Uganda got the first debt deal in April, to take effect next year, while Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire and Mozambique could get deals before the end of this year. Most of the 19 countries now considered as candidates for HIPC deals are African.

Despite the known dependence of many African countries on development aid, net official flows to Africa plunged by 48 per cent in 1996 to $3.2 bn, the lowest level for a decade, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reports in its latest *World Economic Outlook*. These

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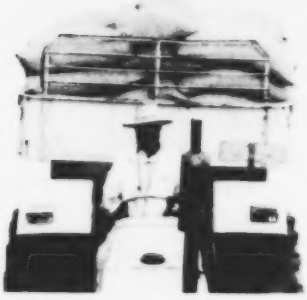

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'Africa must make the most of its assets'

Thelma Awori, new head of UNDP's Africa Bureau, outlines the tasks ahead

"We have to learn to use the immense capacities in Africa, to recognize what people are doing and see how best we can support it, rather than coming in with our own agenda and our own ideas of what people should do," says Ms. Thelma Awori in an interview with *Africa Recovery*. She was appointed Assistant Administrator of the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and Director of its Regional Bureau for Africa (RBA) in September and succeeds Ms. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

Broad experience has made Ms. Awori a firm believer in popular participation in the development process. A Ugandan of Liberian origin and a former university lecturer, Ms. Awori has long been an activist in the women's movement. Before joining UNDP, she worked extensively in community mobilization and human resource development. From 1988-92 she was Chief of the Africa Section and then Deputy Director of the UNDP affiliate, the UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). She then served as UN Resident Coordinator and UNDP Resident Representative in Zimbabwe until 1996, before returning to New York as Deputy Director of UNDP's Policy and Programme Support Bureau.

With a perspective stretching from community activities to international policy-making, Ms. Awori will advance UNDP efforts to help African countries achieve "national execution" of development programmes. Facing a worrying decline in development aid, African countries have to use all available resources in the most effective and sustainable ways, she says. This means strengthening local ability to coordinate, manage, monitor and evaluate external aid, and making greater use of local expertise. Development work, she adds, "should go beyond the donor/recipient relationship and become a true partnership."

Ms. Awori says that she will encourage African countries to have key ministers present at UNDP Governing Board meetings so that they can "drive the process" and have a "much stronger voice in policy-making." After all, she adds, "it is really their show." This year, funding for UNDP's global core programmes is $500 mn, of which $255 mn is for Africa. Specific funds for post-conflict peace-building and rehabilitation, demobilization and de-mining, and the reintegration of refugees and the internally displaced may add another $200 mn or so to total funding for Africa.

Ms. Thelma Awori

With UNDP a major – but far from the only – source of development finance, Ms. Awori sees the need for greater coherence. She expects the Resident Coordinator system and the UN Development Group proposed in the UN Secretary-General's reforms to strengthen partnerships with other donors and make the broader donor community "as user-friendly as possible to host governments."

But in any case, the continent cannot afford the "unbearably high moral, economic, social and political costs" of excluding "a huge segment of our society" from the development process. Exclusion, she adds, is the main cause of poverty and conflict throughout Africa. This makes "inclusion the key development challenge of our time," and dictates an urgent agenda of human and institutional development, and people's empowerment.

The overall goal of sustainable human development "will never be achieved" unless basic gender inequities are overcome.

Ms. Awori sums up this agenda as one of good governance. It has become a priority for UNDP, receiving half the funding for its work in Africa this year. Countries with open and accountable political systems, which promote participation and have visionary leaders who also know what to do today to realize that vision, "these are countries which are moving ahead."

Besides better economic management, Ms. Awori will continue supporting political, legislative, electoral and judicial reforms. UNDP was deeply involved in the democratic transitions in Mozambique, Angola and South Africa, and is helping rebuild the judiciary and the legislature in Rwanda. It also helped 12 countries prepare national programmes which they presented at the first African Governance Forum hosted by the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), in Addis Ababa last July. This is just one part of UNDP's major role in implementing the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa, which it co-chairs with the ECA.

Central to good governance is ending corruption, which Ms. Awori describes as a "cancer," and which UNDP is helping to fight through reforms to promote accountability. She adds that corruption is a global problem requiring "complementary actions by all countries and international institutions."

Ms. Awori notes the linkages between other priority areas for UNDP in Africa, such as poverty eradication and environmental protection. She has no doubt that the overall goal of sustainable human development "will never be achieved" unless basic gender inequities are overcome. UNDP supports projects to help African institutions make gender issues a factor in policy development, training and research. And to overcome "some of the more formidable obstacles to gender equality," the Africa Bureau recently allocated $5.35 mn to the promotion of women's economic empowerment, a network of women's advocates, and women in political leadership, peace building, conflict resolution.

Ms. Awori is chairperson of the African Women in Crisis (AFWIC) project, launched in 1993 by UNIFEM. The project has helped refugee and displaced women prepare to return home by providing reproductive health care, trauma counselling, and training and development of skills. But as Ms. Awori points out, "the women took over, declaring that they would no longer be caught in conflict situations as victims. We had to organize ourselves to support all these different groups of women getting involved in conflict resolution, a movement which took off like wildfire."

Ms. Awori laughs when asked how she has managed to combine the professional and the personal – she is married to a Ugandan diplomat and has raised five children. "Every woman I know in Africa balances career responsibilities with those she has in the family and the community because of her gender. Like all women, we just have to do it all." ■

Resource flows

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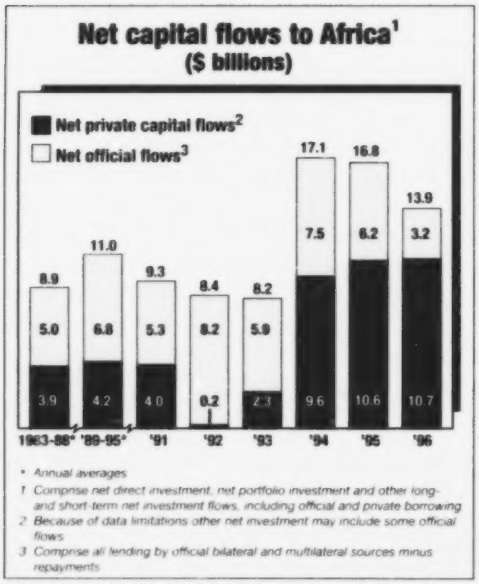
flows are made up of all lending from official bilateral and multilateral sources, minus repayments. There was also a 43 per cent fall in the IMF's soft loan approvals to Africa through its enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF). Similarly, sub-Saharan Africa saw a 38 per cent drop in its primary source of World Bank lending – soft loans from the International Development Association (IDA).

While the total decline in net capital flows to Africa was a somewhat less dramatic 17 per cent (to $13.9 bn) in 1996, this was still the second annual decline in a row. Net private flows, which rose by $0.1 bn to $10.7 bn failed to counter the decline. The good news was that within the private flows, net direct investment rose by over 78 per cent to $5 bn, the highest for at least a decade, and more than offset a 68 per cent plunge in volatile portfolio investment from $1.9 bn to $0.6 bn. As the IMF publication does not provide a breakdown of the distribution of these flows, it is unclear whether there has been any change since the 1985-95 period when Africa's nine oil-exporting countries took 73 per cent of foreign direct investment (FDI).



Source: UN Africa Recovery from IMF, World Economic Outlook, October 1997

Plunge in multilateral lending

IMF loan approvals to sub-Saharan Africa fell substantially, with ESAF loans – the main vehicle for IMF lending to the region – down by 43 per cent to $672 mn from $1.19 bn in 1995/96. Total ESAF approvals in turn fell from $1.47 bn to $911 mn.

New loan commitments by the World Bank to sub-Saharan Africa for the fiscal year to June 1997 in turn dropped 36 per cent to $1.73 bn – their lowest levels this decade, and well below the average annual $3.2 bn of the 1987-91 period – while disbursements fell by 17 per cent to $2.47 bn. The 38 per cent fall in IDA soft loans – the largest source of Bank lending to Africa – from $2.74 bn to $1.68 bn, reflected the drop in IDA's total lending to developing countries, which fell 33 per cent to $4.6 bn. The causes include a reorganization of Bank staffing, and temporary funding arrangements under IDA's 11th replenishment covering 1996-1999 lending operations, pending the clearance of US arrears to the 10th IDA replenishment.

The Bank also attributes the drop in loan approvals to Africa to greater selectivity in lending, and the greater priority being given to countries showing "firm commitment" to better economic management, strongly focused on poverty issues and able to use resources efficiently. The fall is also due to cancellation of failed projects, and more rigorous preparation for new loans.

Bucking the downtrend, lending to Africa through the Bank's private sector affiliate, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), rose from $191 mn through 71 investments in fiscal 1996 to $385 mn in 1997 through 73 investments. The IFC lent some $285 mn on its own account and syndicated another $100 mn.

The queue for HIPC deals

Burkina Faso should be next in line for an HIPC debt reduction deal before the end of 1997, followed by Côte d'Ivoire and Mozambique. The World Bank and IMF have already approved relief for Burkina Faso in principle, and are now ironing out small differences over just how close its target debt-to-exports ratio should be to the lower end of the 200-250 per cent range. Some say 205 per cent would best help the country achieve a sustainable level of debt – defined as a level at which it could service reduced debt while continuing to invest in development.

Technical work and verification of Côte d'Ivoire's debt is now in the final stages. The only remaining hurdle now to a HIPC deal is IMF approval of an ESAF, and agreement could be reached by November. Officials indicate that Côte d'Ivoire could achieve debt sustainability with a target debt-to-export ratio of 145 per cent. This reflects new criteria approved in April to cater for such countries as Côte d'Ivoire with "open trading economies" facing severe budgetary problems due to heavy debt obligations.

Creditors are also aiming for a December decision on Mozambique, a country with an especially complex debt structure and creditor profile. Its nominal debt at end-1996 was $7.5 bn (or a staggering 1,358 per cent of export revenue), or $5.6 bn in net present value (NPV; defined as the sum of all future debt-service obligations on current debt, discounted at market interest rates). And unlike most other HIPCs, Mozambique's bilateral debt is a relatively high 73 per cent of total debt, while multilateral debt is unusually low at 14 per cent.

Presentation of Mozambique's preliminary document to the IMF and World Bank Boards was delayed until April 1997 by problems with its bilateral debt to Russia – some $2.3 bn in nominal terms, incurred during the Soviet era at an artificially high exchange rate. Russia's formal entry into the Paris Club in September means there is now an agreement in principle on applying Paris Club terms to Mozambican debt. What remains to be done is reconciliation of the actual figures for all creditors, including Russia, and an IMF team was in Mozambique in late October helping prepare the data for this exercise. With Russia now on board, at least in principle, an IMF source in Washington anticipates no further major problems for arriving at an HIPC deal for Mozambique.

The preliminary document for Mozambique recommends an HIPC deal taking effect by the end of this year and ending in June 2000. Due to Mozambique's acute vulnerability to external shocks, it also recommends a target NPV debt-to-exports ratio at the lower end of the 200-220 per cent range and a debt service-to-exports ratio below 20 per cent.

Relief at the lower end of the debt-to-exports target range would require donors to provide $1.48 bn, assuming an end point in 1999. This includes $946 mn from bilateral creditors and $533 mn from multilateral creditors.

But, the figure for bilateral creditors – calculated on the basis of amounts owed to each creditor – could exceed the Paris Club's ceiling of 80 per cent cancellation of eligible debt stock. Multilateral creditors favour proportional burden-sharing, but the Paris Club wants the multilaterals to pick up the tab for amounts over 80 per cent. Mozambique awaits the outcome of this dispute. ■

Security Council

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But peace and security cannot be attained in "the conditions of abject poverty that are prevalent in Africa today," Mr. Mugabe said. "Security is no longer confined to preventing invasions," agreed Mr. Annan, but is built on "a firm foundation of sustainable development."

OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim noted that the issues of peace, security and development need to be addressed simultaneously. Conflicts have caused "irreparable loss, damage and destruction to our continent and peoples" and "acute humanitarian tragedies," with far-reaching implications for Africa's stability.

Member states should draw lessons from past crises, the OAU Secretary-General said, including the failure to anticipate and prevent the genocide in Rwanda and the Security Council's "inability to respond appropriately" to the crisis in eastern former Zaire.

Mr. Salim called for a new partnership between the UN and the OAU to deal with current conflicts in Africa. Cooperation should also focus on preventive diplomacy and on forging a joint capacity for post-conflict peace-building and reconstruction. Recent initiatives by external partners to strengthen African peace-keeping capacity are also welcome, the OAU Secretary-General added.

But regardless of the level of cooperation between the OAU and UN, said Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa, successful preventive diplomacy, peace-keeping and peace-building depend on the political will of the parties to a conflict, as well as on the support of UN member states, especially the Security Council. The primary responsibility for international peace and security rests with the international community, Mr. Moussa insisted.

UN Photo 162/97

The Chairman and the Secretary-General of the OAU, Robert Mugabe and Salim Salim, during the Security Council meeting.

Japanese Foreign Minister Keizo Obuchi pointed out that success in resolving Africa's problems would be "a test of the effectiveness" of the Security Council. He stressed, however, as did many other speakers, that peace and development "are two sides of the same coin – without development the causes of conflict will not be eliminated and without peace the conditions for development will not be met."

Continuing to reduce aid flows will "raise the spectre of increased tension and further crises," said French Foreign Minister Hubert Védrine. Sweden's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Lena Hjelm-Wallén, noted that in contrast to the international trend, Sweden's aid budget – the largest part of which is allocated to Africa – will increase substantially over the next three years.

"It need not surprise us that the continent with the least economic progress has produced also the greatest conflicts," said Mr. Robin Cook, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs of the United Kingdom. He said his government is committed to reversing the decline in British aid and it also has announced a new initiative on debt relief for the poorest countries.

While acknowledging that there is a "good that only aid can do," said Mrs. Albright, the "primary impetus" for economic growth must come from the private sector through strategies that "make indigenous investment rewarding and foreign investment welcome."

President Mugabe noted that in the past, Africa had been "dictated to" and was unable to define its own priorities. Today, Africa is not asking for "charity, but for a new partnership which is mutually beneficial." But for this partnership to be "credible," he called for urgent action on debt relief and on stemming the decline in foreign aid.

Many UN initiatives on Africa have "foundered and collapsed" for lack of requisite resources, he warned. In the meantime, over half the population of sub-Saharan Africa continues to live in "absolute poverty" on less than $1 a day. "The credibility of international cooperation is obviously at stake in the face of such damning and distressing statistics," the OAU chairman concluded. ■

US highlights Africa's achievements

The US, which held the rotating presidency of the Security Council in September, initiated the ministerial session "to recognize and support a new quality in Africa's relations with the world," US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said. In many nations, she noted, "difficult reforms are producing economic growth and progress towards democracy."

Nonetheless, US Ambassador to the UN Bill Richardson told *Africa Recovery*, 65 per cent of the debates in the Security Council focus on Africa – and usually its crises. It was rather "to highlight what is happening in a positive sense...democratization, elections, market economies, peaceful resolution of disputes," that the US convened the ministerial session.

US Ambassador Bill Richardson

The objective, Ambassador Richardson said, was to talk about sources of conflict, development, and nation-building and develop strategies for a peaceful and more prosperous Africa. But more important is that the meeting produce some follow-through and not end as another "public relations effort," he added.

The Security Council has discussed with the Secretary-General the importance of the report that he is to prepare by February, which will be a "very serious, substantial effort," the Ambassador said. It should address how a reformed UN, with a strengthened Security Council, can better address African problems.

Mr. Richardson credited the Organization of African Unity with conducting effective – and largely "unsung" – mediation in African crises. The US has provided over $10 mn over the past five years to strengthen the OAU's conflict management centre, and also supports peace-keeping "for Africa by Africans," he said, noting that it is among the donors that are funding the training of an African Crisis Response Force in six countries.

The US will be devoting further high-level attention to Africa, Ambassador Richardson said, with a visit by President Bill Clinton in 1998. During the Security Council meeting, Secretary of State Albright also announced that she plans to visit Africa before the end of this year.

— *M.A.N.*

Africa strives to revitalize agriculture

Progress hampered by limited financing, poor world market prices and rocky reform efforts

Agriculture accounts for the biggest share of most African economies, yet despite some improvements, it remains in crisis. Production lags behind population growth, fostering food insecurity and widespread rural poverty. Policy reforms have so far brought only mixed results, while measures to boost output have been undermined by declining aid and low world prices for Africa's key agricultural exports. In this special dossier (pages 6-24), Africa Recovery looks at some of the challenges facing a sector that could be Africa's 'engine of economic growth.'

By **Ernest Harsch**

This has been proclaimed the "Year of Agriculture" in Senegal, just one of many African countries striving to place the predominant sector of its economy on a sounder footing. By allocating more resources to both food and export crop production, says Senegalese Minister of Agriculture Robert Sagna, the government hopes to stimulate economic activity more generally. "The national economy must rest on the development of agriculture," Mr. Sagna explained in June, at the start of the 1997/98 farming season, noting that greater agricultural surpluses will better supply the country's agro-industries, improve nutrition levels, increase exports and reduce the need for food imports. Moreover, he said, higher rural incomes can help combat poverty, since "poverty is most severe" in the countryside, home to three-quarters of the population.

Similarly across Africa, governments are seeking to unlock the enormous potential of the continent's agricultural sector, "the engine of economic growth," as a conference of agriculture ministers in East and Southern Africa put it. Yet many are also driven by a sense of urgency. Although food supplies in sub-Saharan Africa improved during the 1996/97 season, some 40 per cent of the population remains chronically undernourished and 17 countries, as of August, were confronting serious food emergencies, mainly due to drought and civil conflict. "Hunger and poverty are a serious threat to the peace and security of the continent," notes Mr. Idris Nur at the Department of Natural Resources of the Organization of African Unity.

To overcome the legacy of past neglect of agriculture, many governments have raised producer prices, liberalized marketing, and carried out other policy reforms in recent years, as part of broader adjustment programmes. But the results so far have been mixed. And with only a few exceptions, financially strapped African governments have not been able to devote significantly greater budgetary resources to agriculture. Meanwhile, donor assistance for the sector has tended to stagnate or decline, and the downward trend of world market prices for many of Africa's key agricultural exports has frustrated efforts to earn more from increased output.

Agriculture's impressive 5.2 per cent growth in 1996 was "the major factor behind the strong economic recovery in the region," said the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in its annual report on Africa's overall economic and social situation. The sector contributed significantly to the 3.9 per cent growth in the continent's gross domestic product (GDP). But at the same time, African exporters of agricultural raw materials saw a 3 per cent decline in world prices, while those that exported cocoa, coffee and tea were hit by a 17 per cent decline.

The ECA also emphasized that while policy reforms were a positive factor in "the vigorous rebound in agricultural growth" in Africa, the upturn was "basically due to the conducive weather." Agriculture's dependence on favourable rains highlights a vulnerable spot in many of Africa's economies: when the rains fail, farm output drops.

The problem, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni noted at a meeting on agricultural research last year, is that agricultural productivity in Africa is very low, with most farmers still relying on traditional practices and using few inputs, such as fertilizer, improved seeds or irrigation. "If our countries are to achieve higher economic growth rates," he said, "then we must increase agricultural productivity and overall production. This can only occur if we transform our agriculture from the traditional type to a more scientific and technology-based one," while also placing a high priority on "conserving natural resources such as land and water."

Alarming trends

Even with the prevalence of low-input, traditional farming practices in Africa, overall agricultural production rose by an annual average of 2 per cent between 1965 and 1980, and has continued to climb about 1.8 per cent per year

Harvesting in Ethiopia: here as in many other African countries agriculture is seen as the basis for overall economic and social development.

World Bank

since then. But this has been far from sufficient. With Africa's population growing rapidly (averaging 2.9 per cent a year), agricultural production, including of food, has declined steadily in per capita terms (see graph, this page).

Together with periodic drought and the devastations of war, this decline has meant that hunger and poverty are increasing. According to a major study by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), *World Agriculture: Towards 2010*, the amount of food available per person in sub-Saharan Africa, measured in daily calories, declined from 2,140 in 1969-71 to 2,100 in 1988-90, increasing the number of undernourished people from 94 million to 175 million over the same period.

Poor farmers have tended to benefit far less than large-scale producers from producer price liberalization, while also facing high costs for inputs.

FAO projections indicate that even with an improvement in overall daily consumption levels, the numbers of chronically undernourished people in sub-Saharan Africa will rise to nearly 300 million by the year 2010, about one-third the projected population. And even if agricultural production is able to grow 3 per cent a year between 1988-90 and 2010, estimates the FAO, this will scarcely keep pace with the needs of a growing population. Sub-Saharan Africa's food import requirements may more than double to 20 mn tonnes a year by then, a prospect the FAO says "may be viewed with alarm," given the region's poor financial position.

With many rural producers earning incomes barely at the subsistence level, poverty is also widespread in the African countryside. Out of an estimated 250 million people in sub-Saharan Africa living on less than $1 per day, about 200 million are in the rural areas, according to estimates by the UN's International Fund for Agricultural Development.

New policies bring mixed results

Spurred by such worrying trends, as well as by the continent's broader economic crisis, many African countries embarked upon sweeping policy changes during the late 1980s and early 1990s, pursuing structural adjustment programmes prescribed by the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In agriculture, the measures included freeing market prices from most state controls, dismantling or ending the monopolies previously enjoyed by state marketing boards, and eliminating state subsidies on fertilizer and other inputs. In theory, giving more play to market forces would raise producer prices and thus benefit rural incomes and spur greater production. Evidence from numerous African countries indicates that while some farmers have indeed received higher prices for their crops, the overall results have been inconsistent.

According to the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), in its *Trade and Development Report*, released in September 1997, the domestic terms of trade for agricultural products in 13 sub-Saharan African countries improved from the 1970s through the 1990s. The greatest gain came in the 1985-95 period, when the domestic value of agricultural products increased, in relation to manufactured goods, by 30.6 per cent.

However, UNCTAD pointed out, this increase could not be attributed to liberalization as such, since four countries that deregulated the marketing of export crops saw a slight worsening in their agricultural terms of trade, while five that retained centralized price-setting saw an above-average improvement. Moreover, observed UNCTAD, the price increases did not necessarily benefit the producers themselves. In several countries implementing structural adjustment programmes, liberalization was marked by "growing profit margins for private traders at the expense of farmers."

Even where producers have gained, the effects have been felt unequally. Poor farmers, because they often have only very small or no surpluses to market, have tended to benefit far less than large-scale producers, while also facing prohibitively high prices for fertilizer and other inputs. Since many poor farming families must buy food to supplement their own meagre production, the general rise in food prices has often hurt them more than it has helped. Women farmers, who account for a majority of food producers and usually farm on a very small scale, are at a particular disadvantage (see page 11).

Infrastructure is key

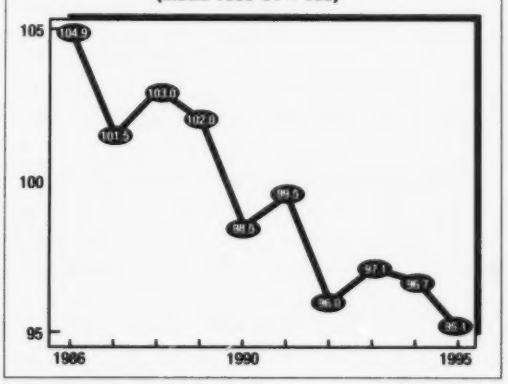
Those farmers who are near markets and roads, have access to inexpensive transport or can store their crops for prolonged periods are in a better position to obtain higher prices; those in remote or inaccessible regions continue to get little for their crops. "You can get your prices right, but you can't get very far if infrastructure is not there," Mr. Samir Radwan, then chief of development policies for the UN's International Labour Organization, said in a 1994 interview.

Meanwhile, the dismantling of inefficient government marketing boards has not always led to more competitive or effective markets. Few private operators are able or willing to fill the gap. UNCTAD notes that the often sudden demise of agricultural parastatals has deprived many African farmers not only of important marketing services, but also inputs, research and extension facilities. Africa's experience with agricultural reform, said the agency, "is yet another example of a 'big bang' liberalization without preparing the institutions and infrastructure needed for markets to perform effectively."

Gradually over the past decade, agricultural reform programmes in Africa have been modified. From an initially narrow focus on raising producer prices and dismantling marketing boards, they have been increasingly broadened to address a range of other problems: the poor state of rural infrastructure, inadequate crop storage capacity, the supply of affordable inputs, research, access to credit and effective extension services, as well as the availability of social services such as health and education, which greatly affect the quality of life and productivity of Africa's villagers.

This shift has also highlighted the continuing importance of government institutions and investments. A 1994 World Bank study on agriculture in sub-Saharan Africa by Kevin Cleaver

Per capita agricultural production in sub-Saharan Africa
(Index: 1989-91 = 100)



Source: UN Africa Recovery from FAO data

and Götz Schreiber acknowledged that private investment can supply only part of the capital needed to transform African agriculture. "Much of it, however," they wrote, "will need to be public capital for rural roads and markets, water supply, investment in education, etc." In particular, the authors stressed, for conserving forests, soils, pastures and water, "there is no alternative to planning, orchestrated by governments."

Links with the environment

Increasingly, it has been recognized that environmental deterioration in Africa is a central factor holding back agriculture. The disappearance of forest areas accelerates land degradation. Even on gently sloping cropland, topsoil losses have been reported to range from 25 tonnes to 250 tonnes per hectare, across the region. One study has estimated that soil degradation and erosion in Africa reduces the productivity of land about 1 per cent a year.

According to World Bank figures, some 2.9 mn hectares of forest were lost each year in sub-Saharan Africa during the 1980s, mainly due to clearing by farmers and loggers. The Soil Reference and Information Centre in the Netherlands estimates that 321 mn hectares of African land are moderately to extremely degraded. Since 1950, the amount of water available per person in Africa has fallen by more than half – and may plummet further to half its current level within the next 25 years.

While African governments have become more aware of the relationship between the environment and agricultural productivity, much of the impetus for concrete and more integrated action has come from the grassroots. Confronted with deteriorating environmental conditions, villagers across the continent, often with support from non-governmental organizations (NGOs), have taken the initiative to set up woodlots, terrace hillsides, conserve threatened water sources and adopt more environmentally sustainable farming methods.

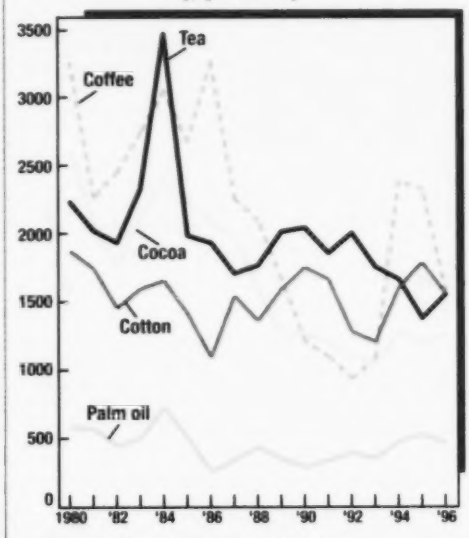
There are now thousands of environment-related women's organizations, says Ms. Maria da Graça de Amorim, the Africa regional director of the UN Environment Programme (UNEP). "Women throughout Africa are on the front lines of rural development, as well as environmental protection and improvement," she says.

In a number of countries, such as Burkina Faso (see pages 20-21), governments have begun adopting policies and programmes that promote higher agricultural productivity while safeguarding the environment. The ECA is urging African governments and donor agencies to integrate food security strategies with environmental and population considerations (see box, page 10).

Boosting yields

Most of the increase in agricultural production in Africa over the past several decades has been achieved by bringing more land under cultivation. Even today, only 7 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's total land area, or about 150 mn hectares, is devoted to crops. But given the often difficult climatic conditions, poor soils and very uneven distribution of water sources, only another 30 mn hectares of unused land can easily be brought under cultivation without further jeopardizing the environment.

World prices for Africa's agricultural exports
($ per tonne)



Source: UN Africa Recovery from UNCTAD and World Bank data

Significantly increasing Africa's output of food and other crops, therefore, will have to come from intensifying production – getting higher yields per hectare. This will require much greater use of irrigation, fertilizer and other inputs, as well as the development and application of new and appropriate technologies.

Currently, only about 2 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's arable land benefits from irrigation, compared with one-third in South Asia. And unlike some regions where excessive use of chemical fertilizer is raising environmental concerns, Africa suffers from the opposite problem. Only an average of 11 kilograms (kgs) of fertilizer are applied per hectare of farmland in sub-Saharan Africa, compared with 69 kgs in South Asia, 71 kgs in Latin America and well over 100 kgs in the developed countries. With fallow periods getting shorter in many African countries, the absence

LDCs must give higher priority to agriculture — UNCTAD

Stronger economic growth in least developed countries (LDCs) will depend above all on more resolute steps to promote agricultural development, argues the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in its *Least Developed Countries 1997 Report*, released on 24 September. Of the 48 countries classified as LDCs in the world, 33 are in Africa.

"Agriculture is the single most important sector in LDCs' economies," notes UNCTAD Secretary-General Rubens Ricupero. "Development of the agricultural sector offers most LDCs their best prospects for accelerating GDP growth rates and for boosting and diversifying their exports. Also, it can give a crucial boost to the nascent manufacturing sector, by expanding the internal market for consumer goods and providing raw materials for processing industries."

The report notes that Africa has made significant progress in reforming its agricultural pricing mechanisms since 1991, but emphasizes that pricing reforms by themselves are not sufficient to attain high and sustainable agricultural growth rates. For that, a range of other factors must also be assured, including appropriate agricultural technologies, efficient marketing systems, expanded access to credit, strengthened extension services and research facilities, and improved soil and water management. While the private sector may be able to play a key role in marketing and credit, the report adds, in other areas "governments must take the lead."

For the second year in a row, according to UNCTAD estimates, African LDCs registered relatively strong GDP growth rate, averaging 4.6 per cent in 1996. This was down from 5.4 per cent in 1995, but still well above the 1990-94 average of 2.9 per cent. Among the factors behind the high growth rate in 1996, according to the report, were "the positive impact of economic reforms, the devaluation of the CFA franc [in 1994] and more favourable weather for agriculture, especially in East and Southern Africa."

of fertilizer has meant that soils are being leached of essential minerals.

During the 1960s and 1970s, government subsidies in numerous countries spurred greater fertilizer use, but with the elimination of subsidies under structural adjustment programmes, few farmers could afford it. In Senegal, for example, fertilizer use increased from 13,000 to 96,000 tonnes between 1970 and 1976, but has since all but collapsed, hovering around 1,500 tonnes. In many countries, food farmers are often the most severely affected, since their lower earnings have placed higher-priced fertilizer virtually beyond reach. According to the FAO, while export crop farmers in Africa use an average of 30 kgs of chemical fertilizer per hectare, for food farmers the average falls to just 5 kgs.

Transporting fertilizer in Nigeria: the elimination of fertilizer subsidies has led to declining use across Africa, especially for food crops.

World Bank / Yosef Hadar

In some countries, this problem is being addressed through a variety of means: encouraging farmers to rely more extensively on organic fertilizer (which is much less costly), promoting mixed cropping (which helps preserve soil fertility), and in some cases through renewed government intervention to better regulate fertilizer markets to ensure supply, quality and affordable prices.

Better access to credit is also recognized as an effective tool, especially for improving the productivity of the poor. Small, short-term loans, often of just $100-200, enable farmers to get new hoes or high-yielding seeds, or to set up food-processing enterprises to increase their incomes. A wide variety of formal and informal "micro-credit" associations are springing up across the continent, many of them relying primarily on the mobilized savings of local communities.

In July, in the Saint-Louis region of northern Senegal, the Federation of Women Producers' Groups and Associations of the Delta launched a new savings and credit fund for its 5,000 members. The group was already the main provider of seeds to the country's rice farmers, and according to Ms. Penda Guèye Cissé, "We produce quality rice that is very competitive with imported rice." With its new credit facility, the federation hopes to expand such activities as growing tomatoes, onions, fruit and other produce for small-scale agro-industries, raising livestock, and more tree-planting.

Financing gap

The ability of farmers' associations such as the one in Saint-Louis to do so much with so little money points to the crucial role of grassroots organizations in helping to overcome Africa's agricultural crisis. And increasingly, governments and international development institutions alike are coming to recognize their potential (see page 19).

While the involvement of farmers' groups can be central in ensuring that agricultural programmes better address the real needs of rural communities, their resources remain limited. They cannot substitute for government agricultural research or extension services, which remain grossly underfunded.

Despite official pronouncements about the importance of agriculture for broader African economic development goals, the overall share of government spending on agriculture does not seem to be increasing. In 12 African countries for which comparable budget data is available,* agriculture's share of total budgetary expenditures fell from an average of 8.4 per cent during 1984-89 to 6.5 per cent during 1990-94. Part of that decline seems due to the increasing budgetary burden of external debt service payments.

As a percentage of government spending on economic sectors, agriculture's overall share fell only slightly between the two periods, from 39.0 per cent to 38.8 per cent. But this average masks a difference in trends between North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. For the three North African countries in the sample, agriculture's share increased from 36.5 per cent to 42.7 per cent, while for the nine countries in sub-Saharan Africa, it fell more clearly, from 39.9 per cent to 37.5 per cent.

According to Mr. Baba Dioum, coordinator-general of the Conference of Ministers of Agriculture of West and Central Africa, such budgetary constraints are "less a question of capacity than of

* *Based on data for Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Morocco, Tunisia and Zambia in the IMF's 1996* Government Financial Statistics Yearbook.

Fighting poverty through rural growth

Chronic food insecurity and poverty are "virtually the same," says the World Bank, noting that 50-70 per cent of poor people in sub-Saharan Africa live in rural areas. This population lacks "income, assets, or entitlements with which to produce, buy, or exchange for sufficient food," the Bank says in a 1996 report, *Taking Action for Poverty Reduction in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Strong rural growth is "clearly vital" for raising rural incomes, the Bank says, adding that a "resurgence of growth in agriculture must be a top priority for Africa's poverty reduction strategy."

Noting that agriculture typically employs up to 70 per cent of the working population, the Bank says labour-intensive agricultural growth is very important for poverty reduction. Women, it says, are "particularly vulnerable" to poverty and are "already overburdened with household and other tasks." The Bank recommends specific measures to help increase women's incomes, including greater access to land, credit and technologies to raise their productivity. Calling for adequate support from donor countries and institutions, the Bank urges African governments to take the lead in helping raise agricultural productivity through better provision of credit and extension services, improved road and marketing infrastructure, and applied research.

political will." Governments, he says, have it in their power to improve policies, allocate a greater share of public investments to agriculture and initiate programmes to combat malnutrition and rural poverty. Nevertheless, he adds, another crucial factor is "whether Africa's outside partners are ready to support its priorities."

One international trend that has hit Africa especially hard has been the long-term decline in world market prices for many of the continent's key agricultural exports. From a peak in the mid-1980s, the prices for coffee, cocoa, tea, cotton, and palm oil have slumped considerably, although coffee and cotton prices had a slight rally in 1994-95 (see graph, page 8).

In an effort to lessen their dependence on just a few traditional agricultural commodities, a number of African countries have sought to diversify their agricultural exports. For example, Uganda, which has long relied on coffee, cotton and tea, has in recent years increased exports of fish, maize and beans, largely to neighbouring markets. "Uganda's food producers appeared to have benefitted considerably from favourable regional trade arrangements, especially the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa," observes UNCTAD's *Least Development Countries 1997 Report*.

One international trend that has hit Africa especially hard has been the long-term decline in world market prices for many of its key agricultural exports.

However, such efforts have been hampered to some extent by the subsidies a number of developed countries provide their agricultural exports, thereby competing unfairly with African producers. Ugandan Vice-President Specioza Wandira Kazibwe has noted that after her country started trying to market significant maize surpluses in neighbouring Kenya, "tonnes and tonnes of yellow maize, very cheap, were dumped into Kenya by the United States.... Where is the equity in this issue of global liberalization?"

Meanwhile, international development assistance to agriculture has been declining. According to the most recent aid report of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the industrialized donor countries, "Aid to agriculture, which typically accounted for close to 20 per cent of bilateral sector commitments in the 1970s and 1980s, has fallen to 12 per cent in 1993 and 1994." The DAC gave no specific breakdown on aid to African agriculture, but did report that total assistance to sub-Saharan Africa declined from $19.5 bn in 1992 to $16.8 bn in 1995 (in constant dollars).

According to the World Bank's 1997 *Annual Report*, its own lending to African agriculture has fallen considerably, from an annual average of $658 mn during 1988-92 to $247 mn during 1993-97. This drop was due partly to a 32 per cent decline in overall Bank lending to Africa, but also to an erosion of agriculture's share, from 18 per cent to 10 per cent.

The Washington-based International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), in a 1994 report, charged that the sharp drop in aid for African agriculture was one factor in the poor economic performance over the previous decade. "We may see more of the same in the future if agricultural development continues to be neglected," commented IFPRI Director-General Per Pinstrup-Andersen.

A conference on food security in Africa held in Addis Ababa this August heard similar warnings. Former US President Jimmy Carter, speaking for the Global 2000 NGO, which is active in several African countries, emphasized that "the global community needs to move forward in helping these nations invest in infrastructure, agricultural research and development, and financial markets. Without these core elements, sub-Saharan Africa will not be able to feed its people." ■

ECA focuses on the food security/population/environment 'nexus'

To combat hunger on the continent more effectively, African governments, donor agencies and other development actors need to better understand how food security is interlinked with population growth and the environment, says Mrs. Paulina Makinwa-Adebusoye, head of the new Food Security and Sustainable Development Division of the UN Economic Commission for Africa (ECA). The ECA believes that Africa's past efforts were too narrowly focused on individual sectors, and that these three areas should be treated as elements of an integrated "nexus." "Nowhere in the African continent is the intermix of the fundamental issues involved in the nexus receiving the integrated attention which ECA will give it," says Mr. K.Y. Amoako, the ECA's Executive Secretary.

Mrs. Paulina Makinwa-Adebusoye of the ECA

During the last 15 years, many African countries were "preoccupied with the removal of inappropriate policies involving internal market decontrol, better management of extension and credit systems, and the restructuring and reorientation of agricultural institutions and infrastructures," says Mrs. Makinwa-Adebusoye. Although these initiatives led to "pockets of good performance," in per capita terms, food production in Africa declined by 23 per cent over the last quarter-century, as Africa's population has been growing rapidly. "With the existing traditional low-input levels of production," she emphasizes, "many African countries now find it difficult to feed this growing population." While shifting and long-fallow cultivation practices and seasonal pastoralism were appropriate under conditions of slow population growth, abundant land and limited capital and technical knowledge, such methods are "no longer adequate."

Previously, the ECA had separate divisions on agriculture (jointly operated with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization), population and natural resources. But following wide-ranging discussions with other UN agencies, government experts, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, the ECA decided to bring together into one division its staff from the three old divisions. This was approved by African ministers responsible for economic and social development and planning meeting in Addis Ababa, the ECA's headquarters, in May 1996, and Mrs. Makinwa-Adebusoye, a Harvard Ph.D graduate in population science with considerable experience in food security and the environment, was named to head the new division.

The division, says Mrs. Makinwa-Adebusoye, is "focusing its energies on information collection and dissemination, the identification of best practices now emerging in some food security and sustainable development initiatives in Africa, as well as on advocacy of sound policy with the Commission's member states." The aim is to facilitate "three essential transitions in Africa: the transition to more effective and sustainable land use; the demographic transition; and the transition to environmental conservation." She adds that "partnership and collaboration with all stakeholders in these transitions will be essential and networking will be encouraged, with appropriate emphasis on capacity building."

Women farmers, the 'invisible' producers

African women are campaigning for more official support

Women farmers in Africa may be poor and illiterate, says Ms. Celina Cossa, president of the National Farmers Union in Mozambique, "but at the same time we are the principal force in the struggle against misery, backwardness and dependency." In many countries across the continent, rural women are pressing for a higher profile, to match their preponderant role in the cultivation and processing of the continent's food. Yet despite some progress in recent years, state agricultural programmes and facilities in most African countries do not yet reflect this reality, and rural women generally remain the continent's "invisible" producers.

In many African countries, women account for up to 80 per cent of food production.

According to official labour force statistics issued by the World Bank and other institutions, 42 per cent of the economically active population involved in agriculture in Africa is female. But the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) suggests that such figures greatly underestimate women's actual role, since there is a tendency to register women in farm households as housewives, although most carry out a wide range of productive activities on top of their heavy load of domestic work. The FAO found, in a survey of nine African countries in 1996, that women's contribution to the production of food crops ranges from 30 per cent in Sudan to 80 per cent in the Republic of Congo, with estimates for other countries tending toward the higher end of the scale. In some, women also work extensively in cash-crop production.

The FAO estimates that in sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, 31 per cent of rural households are headed by women, mainly because of the tendency of men to migrate to cities in search of wage labour; in Latin America and the Caribbean only 17 per cent of rural households are headed by women, and in Asia, 14 per cent.

Despite this substantial role, observes the FAO, "women have less access to land than men; when women do own land, the land holding tends to be smaller and located in more marginal areas. Rural women also have less access than men to credit, which limits their ability to purchase seeds, fertilizers and other inputs needed to adopt new farming techniques."

Only 5 per cent of the resources provided through extension services in Africa are available to women, notes Ms. Marie Randriamamonjy, Director of the FAO's Women in Development Service, "although, in some cases, particularly in food production, African women handled 80 per cent of the work. Of total extension agents at work in Africa today, only 17 per cent are women."

Gradually, especially since the turn of the decade, national mechanisms have been established in numerous African countries to better address the concerns and needs of women, with focal points in the ministries of agriculture and other key institutions. Many of them, however, suffer from limited financing and personnel.

Meanwhile, rural women have been organizing themselves to a much greater extent. In most of the countries surveyed by the FAO, there has been some growth in the number of non-governmental organizations and women's associations involving or working with rural women. Sometimes these are mixed organizations, but frequently, rural women prefer to belong to groups run by women. In Benin, for example, only 8 per cent of rural women belong to formal cooperatives, but an estimated 90 per cent participate in traditional women's savings and credit groups. "An important reason for this apparent imbalance," notes an FAO report on rural cooperatives, "is that they keep control over their own money and can use it flexibly when it is channeled through women's groups."

According to Ms. Comfort Olayiwole, principal of Nigeria's Samaru College of Agriculture, "women's groups and projects are no longer isolated ventures, easily ignored by government or community members. Women are organizing themselves into a formidable political and social movement." ■

Women gain more land rights in Mozambique

Amid considerable controversy and after two years of debate and revisions, a new land tenure law was adopted in July by Mozambique's parliament. Among other things, the new law stresses the equality of men and women in obtaining land titles. Traditional land tenure practices, according to the Council of Ministers, discriminated against women's access, prompting an initial effort to remove references to "customary" law. But opposition parliamentarians from the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo), the former rebel movement, objected to these clauses, as well as to the retention of state ownership of land, with individuals granted use and occupancy rights.

The two main farmers' associations strongly supported the law, while numerous civil organizations lobbied for various amendments. The final draft compromised by reinserting a clause on customary practices, but it specified that these could not violate constitutional guarantees of gender equality. In addition, a new clause was added stating that inheritance of land must be "independent of sex." Commented Ms. Janete Assulai, a lawyer for the Rural Organization for Mutual Assistance: "Our society is accustomed to putting women in second place. We must shift the mentality. It is important to repeat gender equality in all new laws to accustom people to the new thinking."

'Agriculture should be the foundation'

FAO Director-General Jacques Diouf discusses Africa's challenges and priorities

With Africa the only continent in which per capita agricultural production has been falling over the past quarter-century, governments realize how central the sector is to their broader economic and social development, says Mr. Jacques Diouf, Director-General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), headquartered in Rome. However, hastily implemented adjustment policies and declining donor support have made Africa's agricultural revival more difficult, especially in the continent's low-income, food-deficit countries. Mr. Diouf, who comes from Senegal, provided the following written responses to Africa Recovery's questions.

Q. Looking back over the past decade of continuing economic reform in Africa, do you see any change in the priority assigned to agriculture within national economies?

A. We should not forget that there are 53 countries in Africa with a wide variety of conditions and policy experiences. Nevertheless, there has been a frequent tendency in post-independence policies to emphasize industrialization and to invest in agriculture mainly to produce "cash crops." Today, after a long period of concentration on industrial development, most countries recognize that agriculture should be the foundation of their development. Increased agricultural production and productivity create the surpluses and free up the manpower needed for broad-based economic development, starting with agro-processing industries.

As a result of continuing economic reforms, previous policies that hampered agricultural growth are being curtailed. Now the emphasis is shifting to agricultural and rural development, family farms and rural infrastructure. The results are beginning to show. Agriculture output increased 4.2 per cent in 1996, with a better balance between food and non-food crops.

However, despite the declared policy in favour of agriculture, the share of national budgets and total investment in agriculture remains low. I am convinced that governments and the international community need to take a more pro-active approach to put agriculture on a sustainable path to development. I see it as the essential sector of the economies in most countries of the region, particularly the low-income food-deficit countries.

Q. How have the adjustment policies followed by many African countries affected agriculture, and have there been any significant shifts in thinking on the relative importance of price and non-price incentives?

A. Structural adjustment policies and programmes almost always had to be implemented because of severe macro-economic imbalances which required austerity measures with painful effects. It should be observed, however, that in several cases, while the objectives of structural adjustment programmes were sound, the time needed to bring about those objectives was not given adequate consideration.

Often state-run distribution or marketing systems were dismantled too suddenly, before the private sector and farmers could make the necessary adjustments.

In many cases, at least in earlier programmes, the social consequences were underestimated, or no specific measures were taken to ease the very difficult social ramifications, and the package of measures adopted did not include adequate investment to stimulate the primary sector. Often state-run distribution or marketing systems were dismantled too suddenly, before the private sector and farmers could make the necessary adjustments. For example, in many countries the elimination of subsidies and the disruption of distribution systems meant that the use of fertilizers and high-yielding varieties declined steeply. The research and extension services suffered considerably from budget cuts. This impacted quite negatively on agricultural production. Recognizing these consequences, many countries are introducing corrective measures to protect the most vulnerable segments of the population and to ensure access to technology, inputs and markets by their farmers.

The role of price incentives cannot be denied. Farmers everywhere do all they can to take advantage of favourable prices and to avoid activities that offer little return on their investment. But, for most poor farmers in Africa, production depends on the vagaries of the climate. They have no way to obtain modern farming technology, or credit to buy much needed inputs. They often cannot even reach vital markets because of poor infrastructure. All this prevents them from making changes that prices may demand, even when they know what the markets are saying. So, while price incentives are necessary, they clearly are not a cure-all.

Q. How is FAO addressing food security issues in Africa?

A. Africa is the only continent in the world where per capita agricultural production has declined during the past 25 years. Furthermore, 43 African countries are low-income food-deficit countries (LIFDCs). That means that they do not produce enough food to feed their populations and do not have the resources to import the food required to fill the gap. However, their economies are largely dependent on the agricultural sector and most of their poor people are the rural poor who will continue to depend directly or indirectly on agriculture for their employment and their income.

Africans have realized that they cannot have an effective agricultural policy as long as 92 per cent of the continent's arable land continues to produce under rainfed conditions subjected to high occurrence of drought. In their countries, agricultural and food production in particular must increase and it must do so sustainably in order to increase food supply, generate income and thereby improve access to food by all. This objective is at the base of the Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) launched by FAO in 1994 (see box, next page).

The Special Programme offers an innovative strategy to combat hunger and undernourishment. It is designed to help LIFDCs secure food production and increase productivity as quickly as possible, in an economically and environmentally sustainable manner.

The SPFS has a pilot phase of about three years and then an expansion phase. The pilot phase will improve small-scale water control (harvesting, irrigation and drainage) and promote effective means to increase plant production, ensure diversification in small animal production, aquaculture and inland fisheries and also allow the identification of socio-economic constraints to these activities. The pilot phase is already operating in 14 African LIFDCs and the initial results are encouraging, both in terms of increased yields and net returns to the farmer.

The expansion phase aims to build on the achievements of the pilot phase to create conditions for widespread replication of development approaches which have proven to be successful. This phase includes a programme for food security and agricultural policy reform to lift socio-economic and institutional constraints and to create an environment that favours agricultural production, food processing and trade as well as improved access to food. There will also be an investment programme which would ensure availability of the resources required to overcome infrastructure constraints and stimulate private and public sector financing of agricultural activities and services. The Special Programme will be extended progressively to cover all the other LIFDCs of the continent.

Africa also suffers disproportionately from animal and plant pests and diseases. To confront this, FAO has established EMPRES, the Emergency Prevention System for Transboundary Animal and Plant Pests and Diseases. The EMPRES vision is to promote preventive and effective containment and control of the most serious plant and animal diseases and pests by their progressive elimination through international cooperation involving early warning, early and rapid reaction, research and coordination. The programme is aimed at transboundary diseases and pests which are of significant economic importance for a considerable number of countries. Initially the plant pest component has been focused on the desert locust, and the animal diseases component is battling to eradicate rinderpest by the year 2010, while strategies are being developed for such diseases as contagious bovine pleuropneumonia and foot-and-mouth disease.

Q. Has the greater concern for agriculture, including for agricultural research, been reflected in the priorities of donor institutions?

A. The present level of official development assistance for agriculture is lower than at any time since 1970. This trend is extremely worrying because agriculture is the front line of defence for food security in the LIFDCs and FAO is devoting all its capacities to promote this approach in its technical assistance and advisory activities.

But even as there has been a decline in resources, the fact remains that one of the major problems is the actual implementation of past research findings. There is a stark contrast between crops grown on research stations and those grown on the average farmer's fields and between the yield of leading farmers and those of marginal ones in the same country. If we are able to create a good socio-economic environment for agriculture, improve implementation of sound basic crop and animal husbandry practices, and ensure the availability of input and output marketing channels, this will go a long way towards solving Africa's food problems.

Q. How have FAO's own financial difficulties affected its work and priorities in Africa?

A. At a time of budgetary stringency for governments and international organizations everywhere, FAO needs to be innovative in the search for funds to implement the [1996] World Food Summit Plan of Action.

The organization has cemented its ties with its development partners, donor countries, other UN agencies and programmes, international and regional financial institutions, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and also international and national research institutes.

In January, I signed agreements with the World Bank and the African Development Bank, and in July with the Islamic Development Bank, for the promotion of rural development and food security in LIFDCs. Each bank has undertaken to look favourably upon requests from member nations for the funding of the Special Programme pilot activities, up to a ceiling of $1.5 mn per country.

Finally South-South cooperation agreements are gradually being put into place with experienced technical experts from developing countries being sent to work alongside beneficiary farmers of the Special Programme. ■

Promising start to FAO's food security drive

The FAO's Special Programme for Food Security (SPFS) focuses specifically on low-income, food-deficit countries (LIFDCs). By the end of August 1997, the SPFS had been initiated in 14 African countries (out of 19 countries worldwide). Initial results of the pilot phase have been encouraging:

In **Guinea**, a priority for national food security is to rehabilitate local rice production. The SPFS has been operational since 1995 in the Guinée-Maritime and Haute Guinée regions. Crop output in 1995/96 showed increases in yields of 71-146 per cent, compared with the previous season.

In **Eritrea**, the pilot phase began in 1995 in three different agro-ecological zones, with target crops of tef, wheat, sorghum, barley and sesame. Preliminary results of the 1996/97 season show yield increases of at least 100 per cent.

Food insecurity and malnutrition are prevalent on a wide scale in **Ethiopia**. Designed within the framework of the government's programme for using agriculture as the base for overall socio-economic development, the SPFS started in 1995 in Wofla, Habra and Gonder Zuria districts. The target crops are tef, wheat, maize and sorghum. In 1995/96 yields in demonstration areas generally more than doubled. The net incomes of participating farmers also doubled.

In **Senegal**, rice, millet, sorghum and maize were targeted for increased production in the Casamance and Senegal River areas. In 1995/96 rice yields on demonstration plots in the Senegal River Valley varied from 4.2 to 6.7 tonnes per hectare.

In **Burkina Faso**, the SPFS began its pilot phase in 1995 in the Comoé, Hauts-Bassins and Mouhoun regions, focusing on rice and maize. The yield of irrigated rice in 1996/97 was between 5 and 6.6 tonnes per hectare, but still under the target of 7 tonnes.

In **Niger**, the target crops are millet, sorghum, rice and vegetables. The 1996 results for the rainfed areas showed an increase of 30-60 per cent on the demonstration plots.

One important component of the SPFS is its utilization of South-South cooperation arrangements, in which experts from other developing countries are brought in to work with farmers and rural communities. In 1996 an agreement was signed between Vietnam and Senegal, while the signing of similar cooperation arrangements between China and Ethiopia, Morocco and Niger, and Morocco and Burkina Faso are imminent, and an agreement between India and Eritrea currently is being formulated.

Agricultural profile of African countries

	Labour force in agriculture, % of total labour force		Agricultural output				Agricultural exports				Food production index (1989-91=100)		Food aid in cereals, '000 tonnes	Cereal imports, '000 tonnes	Arable land per capita, hectares	Irrigated land, % of arable land	Deforest-ation, avg. annual loss, %	Fertilizer use, 1994/95		Cereal yield, 1995		Rural population in poverty, %
			as % of GDP		avg. annual growth rate, %		avg. annual growth rate of earnings, %		share in total exports, %		total	per capita						kg. per hectare of arable land	% change over 1980/81	kg. per hectare	% change over 1980	
	1960	1990	1980	1995	1980-90	1990-95	1985-89	1990-MR †	1980	1994	1995	1995	1994-95	1994	1994	1994	1980-90					1988
Algeria	71	26	10	13	4.6	1.3	-9.4	5.9 [a]	0.8	0.7	114	102	23	7,760	0.29	6.9	0.8	15.3	-51.3	877	15.4	25
Angola	81	75	n.a.	12	0.5	-1.8	-30.5	-28.3 [a]	9.8	0.3	103	86	*217*	475	0.34	2.1	0.7	2.9	-40.8	286	-54.2	65
Benin	85	64	35	*34*	5.1	*4.9*	-4.2	3.9 [a]	86.6	37.9	121	104	15	107	0.35	0.5	1.3	9.1	1720.0	956	33.1	65
Botswana	93	46	13	5	2.2	0.7	2.7	3.9 [a]	10.3	5.2	111	95	7	75	0.29	0.2	0.5	2.4	-31.4	371	61.3	55
Burkina Faso	92	92	33	34	3.1	*4.6*	5.1	1.5 [b]	88.2	57.3	117	102	19	110	0.35	0.7	0.7	6.5	333.3	795	39.5	90
Burundi	95	92	62	56	3.1	-4.1	-3.7	0.9 [a]	96.8	86.8	96	82	48	105	0.19	1.2	0.6	2.6	188.9	1,287	21.0	85
Cameroon	89	70	29	39	2.2	2.2	5.1	-10.7 [a]	64.4	52.2	108	94	2	226	0.54	0.3	0.6	4.3	-6.5	1,346	55.8	40
Cape Verde	5	31	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	36.1	-22.9 [a]	78.6	58.0	212	185	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	40
Central African Rep.	93	80	40	*44*	2.7	*1.5*	3.1	-8.6 [a]	88.6	38.8	109	95	1	52	0.63	n.a.	0.4	0.6	-14.3	772	48.2	91
Chad	96	83	54	*44*	2.7	*6.9*	-7.4	-4.3 [a]	78.6	77.6	116	101	14	50	0.52	0.4	0.7	2.1	600.0	649	18.6	56
Comoros	86	77	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	13.5	-2.3 [a]	78.5	76.4	110	92	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	50
Congo	68	49	12	10	3.4	-0.9	-14.8	-5.6 [a]	7.6	11.7	106	91	12	86	0.07	0.6	0.2	11.2	220.0	931	8.6	80
Congo,Dem. Rep. of	79	68	25	n.a.	*2.5*	n.a.	-8.5	-26.6 [b]	15.1	29.7	101	86	83	253	0.19	0.1	0.6	0.5	-50.0	799	0.0	80
Côte d'Ivoire	84	60	27	31	-0.5	0.3	-2.7	-1.7 [a]	83.5	67.3	108	91	56	466	0.27	2.0	1.0	17.0	-1.2	1,103	18.9	26
Djibouti	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	18.8	-16.7 [a]	31.3	27.6	79	70	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	70
Egypt	n.a.	n.a.	18	20	1.5	2.1	-6.9	-1.1 [a]	22.2	16.1	120	107	179	9,200	0.06	100.0	0.0	243.3	-10.4	6,048	47.7	25
Eq. Guinea	85	75	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-10.3	-15.3 [a]	94.7	37.2	96	84	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	70
Eritrea	87	80	n.a.	11	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	40.0	93	n.a.	140	281	0.15	5.4	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	517	n.a.	n.a.
Ethiopia	93	86	*56**	*57*	1.4*	n.a.	2.8*	-27.5* [c]	92.2*	81.3	n.a.	n.a.	720	928	0.20	1.7	0.3	4.2	n.a.	1,505	n.a.	43
Gabon	85	52	7	n.a.	1.7	-0.2	-1.2	-7.9 [a]	6.8	15.3	105	91	n.a.	64	0.43	0.9	0.6	0.9	350.0	1,867	1.9	41
Gambia	94	82	30	28	0.4	2.6	-21.9	3.4 [a]	61.8	47.6	100	83	2	97	0.16	1.2	0.8	4.7	-63.0	1,213	-4.8	85
Ghana	63	59	58	46	1.0	2.4	3.2	-4.3 [a]	71.4	43.9	151	130	101	311	0.26	0.1	1.4	2.3	-32.4	1,354	88.6	54
Guinea	94	87	n.a.	24	n.a.	4.5	10.7	9.8 [a]	7.9	9.8	123	106	29	384	0.11	12.7	1.2	1.5	275.0	1,071	12.1	70
Guinea-Bissau	91	85	44	46	6.7	4.8	2.9	-5.2 [b]	83.2	46.1	113	102	2	68	0.33	5.0	0.8	1.8	157.1	1,406	101.1	75
Kenya	88	80	33	29	3.3	-0.4	-1.8	6.5 [a]	50.4	61.0	104	87	102	622	0.17	1.5	0.6	30.5	111.8	1,885	51.5	55
Lesotho	47	40	24	10	2.6	-3.4	7.7	-5.1 [a]	26.5	9.0	90	79	15	99	0.17	0.9	n.a.	18.8	22.1	672	-29.7	55
Liberia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	0.6	-21.6 [a]	41.4	31.1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	23

	Labour force in agriculture, % of total labour force		Agricultural output				Agricultural exports				Food production index (1989-91=100)		Food aid in cereals, '000 tonnes	Cereal imports, '000 tonnes	Arable land per capita, hectares	Irrigated land, % of arable land	Deforest-ation, avg. annual loss, %	Fertilizer use, 1994/95		Cereal yield, 1995		Rural population in poverty, %
			as % of GDP		avg. annual growth rate, %		avg. annual growth rate of earnings, %		share in total exports, %		total	per capita						kg. per hectare of arable land	% change over 1980/81	kg. per hectare	% change over 1980	
	1960	1990	1980	1995	1980-90	1990-95	1985-89	1990-MR †	1980	1994	1995	1995	1994-95	1994	1994	1994	1980-90					1988
Libya	59	11	2	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	4.9	33.5 [a]	0.0	0.7	89	75	n.a.	1790	0.42	21.7	-1.4	30.6	19.5	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Madagascar	86	78	30	34	2.5	1.6	-4.9	-8.0 [b]	91.2	90.8	105	89	26	140	0.24	35.0	0.8	3.6	24.1	1,984	18.0	50
Malawi	94	87	37	42	2.0	1.7	-0.6	2.2 [b]	89.2	92.3	111	94	204	506	0.18	1.6	1.4	21.4	-14.4	1,293	8.8	90
Mali	94	86	61	46	4.3	3.1	3.8	2.3 [b]	94.5	71.0	111	95	17	70	0.26	3.2	0.8	8.4	21.7	812	18.5	60
Mauritania	92	55	30	*27*	1.7	4.9	-1.0	3.2 [b]	24.2	48.1	98	87	22	206	0.09	23.6	0.0	19.2	186.6	840	100	80
Mauritius	40	17	12	9	2.9	-1.4	13.2	2.6 [b]	70.9	30.0	106	100	*2*	255	0.10	17.0	0.2	275.4	10.5	n.a.	n.a.	12
Morocco	73	45	18	14	6.7	-5.9	11.9	-1.5 [b]	30.8	32.0	78	71	13	1,678	0.35	13.5	-1.4	31.2	20.9	453	-55.5	45
Mozambique	88	83	37	*33*	1.6	2.4	1.4	-4.5 [b]	66.3	83.9	110	98	320	496	0.21	3.4	0.8	2.2	-75.6	653	9.6	65
Namibia	71	49	12	*14*	1.8	*6.8*	15.1	-0.3 [b]	13.0	15.3	107	94	*26*	112	0.44	0.9	0.3	n.a.	n.a.	606	-4.1	n.a.
Niger	94	90	43	*39*	*1.8*	n.a.	-5.9	-1.1 [b]	14.8	22.8	118	100	32	155	0.41	1.8	0.4	0.3	-62.5	307	-32.8	35
Nigeria	73	43	27	43	3.3	2.3	-1.4	-2.4 [b]	1.8	4.0	132	114	n.a.	1,078	0.30	0.7	0.7	12.0	110.5	1,124	1.8	51
Rwanda	95	92	50	37	0.7	-10.8	8.6	-19.8 [b]	89.9	48.2	82	72	269	97	0.19	0.3	0.2	0.9	800.0	1,624	33.9	90
Sao Tome & Prin.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-10.1	-11.9 [b]	84.5	41.4	122	109	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	50
Senegal	84	77	19	20	2.8	1.3	7.7	-17.9 [b]	45.8	42.2	114	100	16	579	0.28	3.0	0.7	8.5	2.4	874	59.8	70
Seychelles	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	-16.3	31.9 [b]	22.6	44.0	114	108	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	20
Sierra Leone	81	67	33	42	4.4	-2.8	-11.6	-19.6 [b]	29.9	30.7	88	78	30	141	0.12	5.4	0.6	5.6	55.6	1,146	-8.2	65
Somalia	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	3.6	-3.1 [b]	94.4	54.1	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	70
South Africa	38	14	7	5	3.0	-0.3	8.2	-1.5 [b]	10.8	11.6	85	76	n.a.	913	0.33	9.6	-0.8	63.1	-21.4	1,245	-38.5	n.a.
Sudan	87	69	34	n.a.	0.0	n.a.	5.8	-10.6 [b]	93.1	86.3	124	109	132	1,022	0.47	15.0	1.1	5.6	-13.8	473	-29.4	85
Swaziland	75	39	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	21.6	-1.5 [b]	74.4	40.1	92	80	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	50
Tanzania	n.a.	n.a.	*46***	58**	4.9	4.1	-0.2	-3.1 [b]	71.1	58.4	99	86	118	195	0.12	4.3	1.2	11.4	-8.8	1,419	39.1	60
Togo	80	66	27	*38*	5.6	*3.3*	4.8	-3.8 [b]	23.0	40.7	103	88	8	69	0.61	0.3	1.5	4.6	318.2	691	8.5	30
Tunisia	62	28	14	12	2.8	-2.1	8.0	-12.7 [b]	7.8	13.2	89	81	22	1,592	0.56	7.8	-1.9	18.0	36.4	626	-31.7	15
Uganda	93	85	72	50	*2.3*	3.8	-7.4	-11.4 [b]	99.7	94.7	118	99	62	56	0.37	0.1	1.0	0.4	300.0	1,551	4.0	80
Zambia	85	75	14	22	3.6	-0.5	10.3	10.3 [b]	1.0	2.1	96	83	11	35	0.57	0.9	1.1	11.2	-27.3	1,331	-15.1	80
Zimbabwe	81	68	14	*15*	2.4	1.6	5.0	-1.3 [b]	32.5	35.0	76	67	4	100	0.27	4.1	0.7	59.3	-12.3	531	-55.2	60

NOTES:
- **Figures in italics indicate data for years or periods other than those specified**
- **n.a. : data not available or not applicable**

* **Includes Eritrea**
** **Mainland only**

† **MR: most recent year for which data are available as shown below:**
[a] **1995**
[b] **1993**
[c] **1992**

Sources: UN Africa Recovery from: World Bank, World Development Indicators 1997; *UNDP*, Human Development Report 1997; *World Bank*, African Development Indicators 1997; *FAO*, The State of Food and Agriculture 1996; *IFAD*, State of World Rural Poverty 1992; *and UNCTAD data*

Southern Africa shifts food strategies

Grain markets liberalized, but with contradictory effects

By **Mercedes Sayagues**
Harare

A half-decade after the devastating drought of 1991-92 in Southern Africa, meteorologists tracking another appearance of the El Niño weather phenomenon – a strong predictor of scarce rains in the region – are warning that a new drought is likely toward the end of this year. But in facing such a threat, Southern Africa today is a changed region, with greater agricultural capacities and different strategies for staving off famine.

To begin with, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) is a larger and more diverse regional grouping than during the previous drought. It now includes post-apartheid South Africa – a large grain producer and sophisticated trader – as well as tiny Mauritius, a relatively affluent net food importer.

Peace in Mozambique and the absence of war in Angola mean better harvests and reduced food aid, at least in years of good rainfall. For the first time since independence, Mozambique in 1996/97 grew enough maize – 1,043 mn tonnes – for its own needs. Angola, however, still faces a cereal deficit of more than 530 mn tonnes, according to estimates by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

But the greatest change in Southern Africa is market liberalization. The region is in transition from a highly regulated grain marketing system. Consequently, the concepts and strategies for food security are under review, while liberalization itself has had contradictory effects on Southern Africa's millions of food producers.

Large-scale commercial farmers can play the new game well. They have access to markets, information and credit, while smallholders do not.

Ups and downs of change

Previously, governments in Southern Africa, through their grain parastatals, controlled maize prices, imports and exports, duties, licences and foreign exchange. Consumer prices generally were kept artificially low. Efforts to stimulate production came in the form of subsidies to producers (cheap fertilizer, pesticides, seeds) and to parastatals (transport and storage).

These policies proved too expensive to be sustainable in the long-term. In the 1990s, with the increasing prevalence of structural adjustment programmes, to which liberalization is central, governments have been allowing the private sector and market forces into this highly sensitive area. However, the pace of change has differed from country to country, and so have the effects.

In South Africa, where the Maize Board no longer fixes domestic prices nor controls either imports or exports, a large and sophisticated private marketing system took over smoothly.

At the other end of the spectrum, Zambia moved earlier and further than any other SADC country in its grain marketing reforms – but with catastrophic effect. In 1992, the parastatal maize marketing agency was abolished, prices left to the market and government subsidies removed. Change was unavoidable for the nearly bankrupt government, but the shock was too great. A vacuum was created that the private sector could not fill, due to a variety of reasons (tight credit, high interest rates, high debt levels, low liquidity, a poor transport network, lack of information and unclear government policies). The result was market collapse.

Zambian food losses were minimized only because 1992 was a drought year, with a much smaller crop to market and with external food aid helping to bridge the gap. After the initial shock, a private grain trade is slowly maturing but still faces many hurdles.

Zimbabwe has liberalized the domestic marketing of maize, but the Grain Marketing Board (GMB) still controls exports and imports of white maize, except for food aid contracts. Saddled with a large government debt, conflicting mandates and political pressures, the GMB lacks direction. A recent editorial in the government-owned *Zimbabwe Herald* said: "The government wants to keep the GMB as a parastatal because of its strategic importance, [but] maize marketing is crying out for large independent buyers prepared to compete with each other on price and service."

Although prices to farmers remained static, consumer prices went down. Following the removal of marketing regulations, small-scale mills mushroomed. People bought whole grain, took it to be milled, and got cheaper mealie-meal, Zimbabwe's staple food.

Malawi is at a much earlier stage of change. The parastatal Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) now only buys residual amounts, reselling them when needed to keep prices low. But ADMARC's financial constraints are hurting its storage and

Growing maize in Malawi: the pace and effects of grain market liberalization have been uneven across the region.

World Bank

transport services, thus opening the door to private trade. In 1995, for the first time, Malawi filled its strategic grain reserve through a tender, which was won by ADMARC but in competition with other bidders.

In Mozambique, the Cereal Marketing Board previously tried setting a floor price, but for this year's crop it has liberalized prices. However, its lack of cash, coupled with a marketing system ruined by civil war, means that farmers in the remote maize-surplus northern provinces have sold at lower prices – if and when a buyer appears.

Shifts in production

One common argument for liberalization has been that freeing prices and providing greater market incentives will encourage farmers to grow more. So has liberalization boosted food production? "There is not enough evidence, not enough time to say," answers Mr. Caesar Chidawanyika, senior programme officer with the World Bank.

Liberalization will likely change crop patterns, as farmers shift their production in response to market signals. The SADC food security unit sees cereal production moving northwards towards better rainfed areas in Zambia, Mozambique and northern Zimbabwe. However, transport infrastructure there is poor and will require substantial investment and improvements. Zambia's northern farmers, whose low-value maize often rots for lack of transport, may switch to high-value crops like tobacco, sunflower and groundnuts, which are more profitable for traders and truckers.

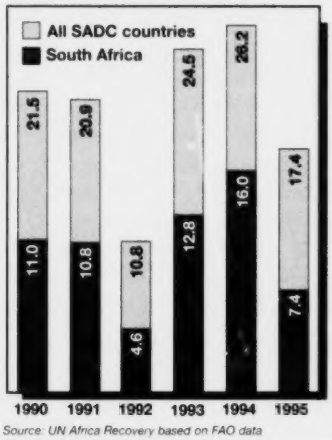
In Zimbabwe, many smallholders are switching from food crops to cotton and tobacco. Paprika, for example, fetches Z$2,500 a tonne, while maize brings only Z$1,200 a tonne.

Beyond the impact of market forces, variable rainfall also means that rainfed maize production is becoming unviable in parts of Southern Africa. One answer is crop diversification. Drier regions would be better suited for growing drought-resistant crops like sorghum and millet. But change is not easy. "You talk to many officials at ministries of agriculture about food," says Mr. Roger Buckland of the SADC food security unit, "and the first thing they think of is a corn cob."

Small-scale farmers hurt

Has liberalization helped smallholders, who grow the bulk of the region's food? "It has

Cereal production in Southern Africa (mn tonnes)



Source: UN Africa Recovery based on FAO data

SADC cereal goal: more trade, smaller reserves

The working definition of "food security" has been shifting in recent years, from referring almost exclusively to the amount of food physically available in-country, to now also encompassing people's access to food. "The access side of the coin means that household coping strategies, income generation and safety nets are much more on the agenda," says Mr. Roger Buckland of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) food security unit.

This has led to a major change in concerns about strategic grain reserves (SGRs). In the 1980s, countries felt safe only when they held in their silos enough maize for a year's consumption. But storing maize is expensive (one estimate puts it at $62 a tonne per year). Also, today's earlier weather forecasts allow for better planning, making it less necessary for governments to have large stocks. For example, in July, when the first warnings of another drought were issued, South African and Zimbabwean traders began scouting world markets for cheap maize.

The UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Bank recommend an SGR covering three or four months' consumption, coupled with a cash reserve to import food. By August, Zambia held an SGR of 130,000 tonnes; Mozambique and Tanzania, 50,000 tonnes each. The smaller countries, Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho and Swaziland, have scarcely any reserves at all; in the words of one food security expert, "if in need, they pick up the phone and place an order in South Africa." However, landlocked Zimbabwe and Malawi, where food shipments take up to three months to arrive from coastal ports, prefer to hold on to larger stocks (180,000 tonnes for Malawi; a minimum of 500,000 tonnes, going up to 930,000 tonnes for Zimbabwe).

In July, SADC ministers of food, agriculture and natural resources agreed that the existing regional food reserve scheme should be transformed into a financial facility. This follows the shift from national self-sufficiency to a trade-based regional approach. The Trade Protocol signed by SADC countries in 1996 makes food movements among countries nominally easier. But trade is still hampered by protective tariffs and complicated border and customs regulations. "We need bold decisions: free flow of people and goods among SADC countries," says Mr. Reginald Mugwara, SADC food security sector coordinator.

Today, food commodities appear on the region's young commodity exchanges. Grain prices are quoted on Zimbabwe's television evening news. But, to date, liberalization has been more of an internal process. "It is too early to see signs of greater inter-regional trade," says Mr. Caesar Chidawanyika of the World Bank.

To boost trade, experts argue, public and private investment is needed for roads, railways, storage and training of traders to improve the marketing chain. The region's transport network is not yet geared to low-value, high-volume food staples.

Tough plant and animal health standards and controls also must be enforced so pests do not spread through the SADC region. There is a bad precedent: one uninspected food aid shipment from Tanzania to Zambia introduced the dreaded larger grain borer. This bug, now firmly established in southern Zambia and northern Zimbabwe, can reduce yields by up to 40 per cent.

Severe trade imbalances and an unequal trading environment cause problems within the region. South Africa, for example, gives incentives to its agricultural exporters, making it harder for producers in other countries to compete. Meanwhile, SADC grain trade patterns are highly variable, going from large maize surpluses to large deficits when drought hits.

Commercial traders, food security experts and aid agencies agree on one thing: market transparency and coherent government policies are essential. "Politicians try to sidetrack market liberalization to look after their own constituencies, but governments need to stick to decisions," says Mr. Mark Smulders, an FAO food security expert. "Better governance goes hand-in-hand with market liberalization."

— Mercedes Sayagues

widened choices of markets, but has disadvantaged small-scale farmers," says Mr. Chidawanyika. He adds, however, that this is "a transitory phase."

Larger-scale commercial farmers can play the new game well. They have access to markets, information and credit, while smallholders do not. Moreover, relatively few small farmers are surplus producers, and only those able to market surpluses have benefitted from improved producer prices. Meanwhile, as they adjust to the loss of state subsidies, poorer farming households remain vulnerable to the higher costs of agricultural inputs and increased user charges for social services.

Even for those who can market small surpluses, prices are not always favourable. "Sometimes, when private traders are monopsonists [sole buyers], they push prices down," says Mr. Chris Eldridge of the Save the Children Fund (SCF), a non-governmental organization (NGO) active in the region. According to Mr. Eldridge, "The net result [of liberalization] has been, for many rural producers in Southern Africa, a combination of both state failure and market failure."

Even for proponents of market liberalization, the state has a continuing role to play. In the initial stages of market liberalization, they argue, governments should act as facilitators, providing coherent policies and messages and a stable economic environment.

For Mr. Chidawanyika, the state should monitor food stocks; create an environment that motivates producers; abolish regulations that discourage private trading, such as price controls; discourage monopolies, since market success depends on bringing in as many players as possible; and enforce rules on plant and animal health. In addition, and not least important, governments should service those areas where it is not profitable for the private sector to operate.

According to Mr. Mark Smulders, FAO food security expert, government agricultural extension agencies also can provide clear and updated messages "to help smallholders cope with transition" to the new realities of agricultural markets.

Government effectiveness

An effective government role is especially important in remote regions and for the poorest sectors of society. Successive droughts in the 1990s, combined with structural adjustment and the AIDS pandemic, have eroded the capacity of many rural households to recover. "Poverty exists; drought accelerates it," says Mr. Reginald Mugwara, SADC food security sector coordinator.

Since private companies operate for profit, the provision of safety nets is left to the state. Governments, squeezed by tight budgets, in turn often bounce the ball back to NGOs. A regional study on food security by the Save the Children Fund stresses that 80 per cent of any successful effort in preventing a drought from turning into famine lies with villagers themselves. But their efforts are invisible compared to those of aid agencies.

To be more effective, any intervention by governments and donor organizations "must understand rural people's response and efforts," says Mr. Eldridge, who coordinated the SCF study. ■

WFP / F. Mattioli

Zimbabwean maize transported to Mozambique: increased grain trade is central to food security strategies in Southern Africa.

Strengthening and 'Africanizing' agricultural research

Among the top priorities for economic development in Africa is "the transformation of African agriculture through research and technology transfer," says Professor Maurice Onanga, Chairman of the Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa (FARA), established in February 1997 by Africa's main subregional agricultural research institutes. But breakthroughs in agricultural research are lagging far behind the continent's need to ensure increased production and food security. According to estimates by the UN Conference on Trade and Development, public investment in agricultural research and extension services in sub-Saharan Africa has generally been less than 1 per cent of agricultural GDP, compared with more than 2 per cent in the faster-growing Asian countries, where "green revolution" innovations did much to boost average farm output.

Beyond resources, another problem facing research in Africa is developing new seed varieties and technologies adapted to very specific local conditions, which are more difficult and highly varied than in Asia. This requires not only strengthening national research institutions, but also increasing the direct involvement of farmers' organizations, the private sector, non-governmental organizations and other users of new agricultural technologies.

Promoting increased funding and more appropriate research have been key goals of the Special Programme for African Agricultural Research (SPAAR), a coalition of donor institutions and research organizations based at World Bank headquarters in Washington. Although SPAAR has been seeking to increase African participation since 1995, and its February 1997 plenary session in Mali for the first time included a sizeable number of farmers, Prof. Onanga noted that "there is still a perception that [SPAAR] is a coalition of stakeholders largely dominated by donors."

FARA was launched during the plenary to enhance the leadership role of African agricultural research institutes, both in setting their own research agendas and in coordinating their approaches to donor institutions. Mr. Jean-Louis Sarbib, World Bank Vice-President for Western and Central Africa and the current Chairman of SPAAR, supported this initiative. FARA's establishment, he said, was "a major step forward in the effort to regionalize African agricultural research and to ensure that the responsibility for setting the research agenda would be in African hands."

Farmers organize to promote interests

Grassroots participation essential for successful rural development

By **Masimba Tafirenyika**

Despite repeated pronouncements by governments and donor agencies about the importance of popular participation, Africa's rural producers still generally have little voice in shaping official agricultural and rural development policies. But step by step, farmers' organizations are developing across Africa, and they are more forcefully making the concerns of their members known.

Of the 86 farmers' organizations belonging to the International Federation of Agricultural Producers, 23 are from 19 countries in Africa. In Zimbabwe, 1.3 million households belong to the Zimbabwe Farmers Union (ZFU). With an average of six per family, the ZFU caters to almost 8 million people. In Senegal, the National Council for Rural Unity and Cooperation comprises nine farmers' associations with a combined membership of 3 million.

According to the International Cooperative Alliance, the number of farmers' cooperatives in Africa is smaller than in other regions and accounts for just 6 per cent of the world total, but is still significant: 24,000 cooperative associations, with some 10.4 million members. In some countries, such as Morocco, one in five small-scale farmers belongs to a farmers' organization, most frequently a cooperative.

Farmers are joining together to voice their grievances and influence agricultural policies.

UNICEF

Pressing for local concerns

Increasingly, such farmers' associations – as well as the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that often work with them – have been pressing governments and donor institutions for policies and programmes more beneficial to small-scale farmers. They are calling, among other things, for a review of marketing regulations; lower duties and taxes on imported machine tools and irrigation equipment; and better access to credit.

Some groups emphasize self-reliance, seeking to close the gap left by cuts in agricultural support services. In Cameroon, for example, the Common Initiative Group of Women Farmers of Bogso promotes the cultivation of local crops, especially cassava. The group has been so successful in producing, processing and marketing cassava that it has been able to finance a school, a library, a processing plant to produce cassava flour and a communal kitchen, as well as to purchase medical supplies.

The Organization of Rural Associations for Progress in Zimbabwe has organized more than 2 million villagers through small, autonomous rural groups. Communities are left to draw up their own priorities and much of the organizational decision-making, thus empowering villagers and lessening their dependence on government services.

Government attitudes toward autonomous farmers' organizations vary. At a May 1996 seminar in Cape Verde, representatives of rural organizations from 13 francophone countries in the Sahel and Maghreb regions observed that some countries (Burkina Faso, Niger, Senegal) have long permitted farmers' groups to operate relatively independently. Others, however, have traditionally stressed more centralized planning and tight administrative controls, hampering the development of strong rural organizations.

Positive responses

In Zimbabwe, the powerful ZFU has been able to elicit a positive response from the government. The ZFU's members are now exempt from taxes on agricultural inputs, and the union is currently working with the government to widen the knowledge base of farmers and design appropriate marketing strategies. Mr. Kudakwashe Matekaire, Director of ZFU, told *Africa Recovery* that his organization also is "pushing the government to quicken the pace of land resettlement of peasant farmers."

The Cooperative College in Moshi, Tanzania, with technical assistance from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), has embarked on an innovative training programme for managers of farmers' organizations and government officials to promote more participatory, member-oriented approaches.

A number of countries, including Ethiopia, Guinea, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia, have started changing their legal and policy frameworks, with the aim of transforming agricultural cooperatives and other farmer organizations from state-supported rural enterprises into more independent, farmer-run businesses.

While donor assistance has been useful in some instances, other experiences have pointed to the importance of ensuring that farmers' organizations do not remain dependent on outside aid. For example, an evaluation of the FAO's People's Participation Programme in Ghana found that out of 448 farmers' groups set up since 1983, only 49 (11 per cent) were still active in 1993. The FAO evaluation determined that those groups that were able to establish more self-sustaining credit facilities and were given greater scope for local leadership initiative tended to provide benefits more in line with farmers' own needs – and therefore remained viable. So that small-scale farmers can "take greater control of their community's development," the FAO argued that participatory approaches need to be promoted much more widely.

"We don't expect the government and donors to do everything for us," said the ZFU's Mr. Matekaire. "All we are asking them is to create an environment that supports and promotes local initiatives and enthusiasm." ■

Burkina Faso protects its fragile soils

Environmental sustainability is key to agricultural revival

By **Jean-Marie Sawadogo**
Ouagadougou

"The land provides us with all our food," explains Mr. Pierre Lagwaré, a grain farmer. "So we're obliged to give back to it the nutrients it needs to ensure our production. Our survival depends on that."

Like other farmers in the village of Goué, some 30 kilometres from Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso, he is worried about the fertility of his land, which has been declining year after year from overexploitation and poor farming practices. In many villages in this region of the central plateau, where methods to combat erosion and restore soil fertility have not been well disseminated, millet yields remain low, compared with the west, where the soil is richer, or even with the arid Yatenga region in the north, where soil conservation techniques are more widely practised.

Unlike some of his neighbours, Mr. Lagwaré has learned about anti-erosion and soil-recovery practices, and is aware of the opportunities for increased production if the land can be regenerated. But he does not have the resources to put his knowledge into practice.

The government shares the concerns of farmers like Mr. Lagwaré. It believes that Burkina's economic development depends on a significant increase in agricultural production, to attain food security, raise rural incomes and improve the trade balance. Agriculture employs 86 per cent of the economically active population and accounts for 30 per cent of the country's gross domestic product.

Agriculture/environment linkages

The government also believes that increasing farm output must be done in a sustainable manner, integrating agricultural, environmental and population considerations. According to Mr. Christophe Yaméogo, who oversees the government's 1996-98 agriculture sector adjustment programme, agriculture and livestock cannot be developed in Burkina without "a sustainable development approach which emphasizes using natural resources in a non-degradeable and renewable manner." Local communities have been given responsibility for managing their farmlands, pastures and forests to ensure that development projects place a high priority on environmental protection.

Developing agriculture on a sustainable basis will require significant financing, at a time when development assistance has tended to decline overall. However, through its adjustment programme, supported by the World Bank and other donor institutions, the government has been able to mobilize financing for agriculture, while it also is receiving help from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other partners.

Women in Burkina Faso prepare an earthen bund to slow rain run-off and prevent erosion of the topsoil.

Together with favourable rains last year, these efforts brought a cereal harvest of 2.4 mn tonnes in the 1996/97 season, 7.5 per cent higher than the previous harvest, while the production of cotton, the main export crop, reached an all-time record of 206,000 tonnes. However, uneven rains this July and August have many farmers worried about the coming season.

The general decline in soil fertility in Burkina is a result of overcultivation, especially in the cereal zones, as well as overgrazing. These have led to a shortening of fallow periods and have obstructed the replenishment of the soil's natural nutrients. Nationally, only 15 per cent of farmers have adopted anti-erosion techniques, while just 9 per cent use organic fertilizers and 8 per cent practice agro-forestry.

The Soil Fertility Management Unit (UGFS), set up by the government in 1995 with financial support from the Netherlands, urges implementation of a national strategy integrating management of soil fertility with the development of agricultural input markets. Noting that only some 2,400 tonnes of locally produced phosphate fertilizer are being used each year (out of estimated national phosphate reserves of some 100 mn tonnes), UGFS expert Mr. Jean-Claude Dabiré emphasizes the need to apply much more phosphate fertilizer, in conjunction with organic fertilizers. "If we don't overcome our soil's phosphate deficiency," he says, "it will not be possible to develop agriculture on a sustainable basis."

But the situation has been uncertain since the government withdrew from the marketing of agricultural inputs, especially mineral fertilizer, leaving this activity to the private sector. Unfortunately, private operators have not shown much enthusiasm.

Fertilizer too costly

According to Mr. Ninda Taoko, president of the Roumtenga village association, mineral fertilizer was readily available in the past and his association bought it in bulk, reselling to farmers on credit. "But today, everyone has to get their own. And when they can find it,

the price is beyond our means." Mr. Henk Nugteren, an economist working with the UGFS, notes that while the cost of mineral fertilizer is unfavourable for cereal producers, farmers producing cash crops, such as cotton, can generally afford it. As a result, many grain producers have given up using fertilizer, and simply pray for good rains. But water alone cannot nourish the soil.

The UGFS is meeting with private entrepreneurs to encourage them to invest in the importation and marketing of fertilizer throughout the country. Mr. Nugteren thinks the government should set up a purchasing centre to achieve economies of scale and lower costs.

Another result of liberalization has been the spread of fraudulent practices, in which poor quality products are sold to farmers at low prices, contributing to losses in output.

Mr. Georges Henry Ouéda, programme director for Naturama, a Burkinabè NGO, notes that besides the availability and accessibility of fertilizer, farmers need to receive more training and information about their proper use. "We think that making farmers aware of how environmental degradation harms agriculture can only increase their support for the programmes set up for their benefit," he says.

Local communities are now responsible for managing their farmlands, pastures and forests to ensure that development projects place a high priority on environmental protection.

Participatory approach

Many farmers are still unaware that their soil's fertility can be improved, indicating the need for greater dissemination of soil recovery techniques. The Directorate of Agricultural Extension (DVA) has been working for several years with various NGOs to help train and organize farmers, and now covers 7,300 out of Burkina's more than 8,000 villages.

The DVA pursues a participatory approach, emphasizing identification of the needs and concerns of the producers themselves, to better support them. "The concerns of the people form the basis of themes for intervention and training," explains Mr. Robert Bonkoungou of the DVA. "The themes that are disseminated most often establish an 'interlinkage' between agriculture and the environment."

Farmers are warned about the dangers of using mineral fertilizer alone and to always apply it together with organic compost, to improve the soil's water-retention capacity and thereby improve yields. They are encouraged to grow fodder crops for livestock to reduce overgrazing that depletes the vegetation cover. In the north many farmers have been taught how to build bunds with stone, earth and vegetation to slow water run-off and thus prevent topsoil erosion.

Higher-yielding seeds are also important, and the research station in Kamboincin has been developing improved varieties of rice and other grains for distribution to farmers. The DVA is training farmers to multiply stocks of improved seeds, for use on their own fields or for sale to other farmers.

Combatting deforestation

Another common concern is deforestation. Each year, the country loses 32,000 hectares of forests, through clearing for agriculture and the cutting of trees for fuelwood. Burkina's population depends on fuelwood for 90 per cent of its household energy needs. Worried about the harm deforestation is causing to the environment, the government has involved the population in tree-planting operations, is seeking to regulate tree-cutting and is promoting the use of more efficient domestic stoves that use less wood.

The government's National Centre for Forestry Seeds, which specializes in seed varieties for reforestation, produced 3 mn seedlings last year. Recently it has been emphasizing certain varieties which not only help protect the environment, but also yield marketable products that can increase rural incomes.

Many NGOs are encouraging farmers to minimize land clearing and combine cultivation with tree planting and the maintenance of natural vegetation cover. The Long Live the Farmer Association (AVLP) promotes "assisted natural regeneration," in which farmers are shown how to cut fuelwood selectively, while conserving vegetation that provides soil nutrients. The Delwende Development Association, another NGO, helps villagers set up tree nurseries and trains farmers to teach agro-forestry techniques to other farmers.

Mr. Jean Dipama, a farmer in Saaba, invested heavily in agro-forestry several years ago, but the venture failed. "I planted more than 2,000 trees on an area that I had farmed for decades. But most seedlings were destroyed by animals that other farmers simply let loose for grazing."

This highlights another common problem in Burkina: the apparent competition between agriculture and stockraising, although the two should be complementary. Their integration is vital for developing agriculture in a way that safeguards the environment. To that end, the DVA is training farmers to cut and store fodder, so that their animals can be fed in chosen locations and do not graze across cultivated fields.

Small-scale irrigation

Given the uncertainty of the rains, greater efforts are being made to manage the country's scarce water resources. In particular, the government is seeking to develop irrigated rice cultivation, especially around the Bagré dam and other publicly funded irrigation projects, both to improve food availability and to reduce the costly importation of some 100,000 tonnes of rice each year.

However, the large investments needed for such irrigation projects (costing the equivalent of $4-6,000 per hectare) place them beyond the reach of most individual farmers. The agricultural extension services therefore emphasize rainfed rice farming in the lowlands. According to Mr. Bonkoungou, the DVA is developing rice varieties suitable to the lowlands and making them available to farmers at "accessible" prices.

Nevertheless, the government is seriously considering the development of small-scale and private irrigation projects. It has been conducting a campaign for several months now to encourage the private sector to invest in irrigation. The promulgation in January 1997 of new land tenure legislation permitting private ownership of land should make such investments more attractive.

The number of private irrigation works already had been growing. Last year, private irrigated rice farms produced nearly 33,800 tonnes of rice on 7,660 hectares. This was an important contribution to national rice production, which totalled 112,000 tonnes in 1996, nearly double the 61,000 tonnes produced two years earlier.

While farming in Burkina remains a difficult occupation, Mr. Lagwaré persists. With just a little help, he is convinced, he can organize together with other farmers "to achieve great things." ■

Improving Africa's water supply

Special Initiative seeks greater access for farmers and the poor

By ***Margaret A. Novicki***

Four countries – Mali, Ethiopia, Uganda and Mozambique – and the Zambezi River Basin have been selected as the initial focus for collaboration on improving the availability and management of the continent's water resources within the framework of the UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa. The availability of water has emerged as a critical issue in Africa's development in part because providing households with secure sources of water and making water available for rainfed and irrigated agriculture are seen as key elements in any strategy for poverty reduction.

Over 250 million people – half of sub-Saharan Africa's population – have no access to safe drinking water, and almost 300 million lack adequate sanitation. If the current situation does not improve, an estimated 500 million Africans are likely to be without safe water and sanitation by the year 2020, given the rate of population growth. Dwindling water supplies of lower quality, and at ever-higher costs, also will constrain food production and increase environmental degradation – and may possibly result in conflict, among users within countries and across borders.

John Isaac

The poor in Africa are forced to spend too much of their limited income, energy and time to get insufficient amounts of water.

For these reasons, the goal of the Special Initiative's water component – with the World Bank and the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) as the lead agencies – is to ensure reasonable access to and a fair share of water at affordable prices for the poor majority throughout the continent. This "fair share" approach calls for balanced use of water across different sectors and needs, in national economic development plans and between countries using shared water resources.

The Special Initiative, launched by the UN in 1996, is a programme of concrete actions to accelerate African development over the coming decade by boosting access to basic education, health, and water, improving governance and increasing food security. It aims at achieving greater cooperation among the agencies and organizations of the UN family, including the Bretton Woods institutions, in support of Africa's development priorities.

Challenges of water supply

According to a recent World Bank study, *African Water Resources: Challenges and Opportunities for Sustainable Development*, two-thirds of sub-Saharan Africa's rural population and one-quarter of urban dwellers currently lack access to potable water. Millions of Africans die each year from water-borne and water-related diseases.

In Africa, "water is unevenly distributed by nature and unevenly allocated by humans," said Dr. Jorge Illueca, Assistant Executive Director of UNEP. The poor spend "too much of their limited income, calories and time to get inadequate amounts of water," are most at risk from the lack of water availability, and are likely to pay the highest price for this scarcity, according to Dr. Illueca.

Another problem is that sub-Saharan Africa, a large portion of which is semi-arid, has "too little water or too much, in the wrong place or at the wrong time, and often of poor quality," according to the World Bank. Precipitation is highly variable and unpredictable across much of sub-Saharan Africa, and run-off – the water which is removed from the soil over the surface or through drains beneath the surface – is exceptionally low. Drought is endemic, often lasting from one to five years.

Agriculture already accounts for more than 80 per cent of water consumption in sub-Saharan Africa. But less than a third of Africa's irrigation potential is exploited. The Food and Agriculture Organization estimates that in 1990, only 2 per cent of sub-Saharan Africa's arable land was irrigated.

With an annual rate of population growth at nearly 3 per cent, crop yields must be increased significantly if countries are to advance towards food self-sufficiency. This means production must be expanded through better water harvesting, water and soil conservation, improved technology and farming practices, and increasing areas under irrigation. But only 4 per cent of the approximately 4 trillion cubic metres of renewable water available is currently being used, due to lack of appropriate infrastructure and technical and financial means.

In addition to its development benefits, efficient water management is becoming an ever more urgent environmental concern in a continent undergoing rapid growth in urbanization and industrialization, as well as population. These trends have worsened contamination of freshwater from domestic and industrial waste as well as agrochemicals.

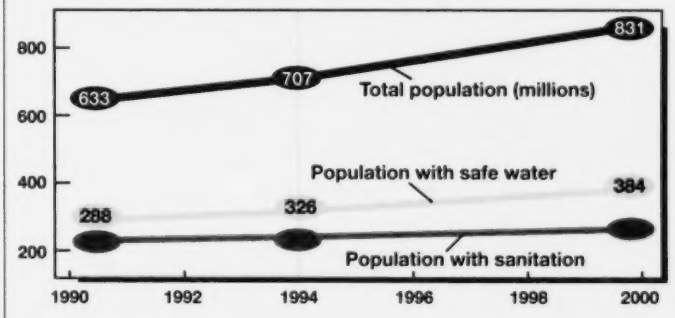
Lack of national water strategies

In November 1995, a critical review of the status of the water sector was begun by the Working Group on Water Supply and Sanitation Development in Africa – established under the aegis of the UN Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Council and composed of African water sector professionals. Among the problems it identified in a soon-to-be-released report were the lack of adequate national water strategies in many countries at a time when competition for water use has become more intense. This point was also stressed in a study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), which concluded that the single most important factor behind water scarcity is poor water policies.

In Africa, this problem is compounded by the low level of government spending on water supply and sanitation – usually less than 1 per cent of the national budget – along with poor operation and maintenance of water and sanitation infrastructure. The crisis extends beyond national borders as well. All countries in sub-Saharan Africa share one or more river basins, with at least 54 rivers or water bodies that cross or form international boundaries. But few are effectively managed in a joint manner.

Better cooperation and greater investment in shared water basins is needed, but so too is water policy reform at the national level. The first step in the process, say the experts, is to acknowledge water as a scarce resource and its centrality to poverty reduction, economic growth, food security and environmental protection.

Africa: water coverage to the year 2000
(if 1990-94 trends remain unchanged)



Source: UNICEF/ WHO

A focus on collaboration

The Special Initiative on Africa is working to achieve UN system collaboration in support of the goal of equitable access to and sustainable use of the continent's water resources. A UN inter-agency Informal Working Group on Water was formed in April 1996, co-chaired by UNEP and the World Bank, to decide on practical steps to meet the four objectives of the Special Initiative's water cluster.

The working group agreed to designate the initial four target countries of Mali, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda, and the Zambezi River Basin based on their geographical representativity and on evidence of government commitment to integrated water resources management. The group also agreed that among the target countries, the broad goals of cooperation are to include capacity-building, improvement of information capacity, identification of investment requirements and stimulation of sector investment.

Under the water component's broad objective of equitable access to and sustainable use of water resources, activities under

Strengthening water basin management in the Zambezi

The Zambezi River Basin, shared by eight states and covering about 1.35 mn square kilometres, forms a major part of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, where more than 70 million people lack access to safe water. At current population growth rates, the region faces chronic water shortages within two generations.

As the largest of the African river systems flowing into the Indian Ocean, sustaining some 26 mn people, the Zambezi River Basin has been selected as a focus by the Special Initiative's Informal Water Working Group to demonstrate coordination of UN efforts and inter-agency cooperation. A key lifeline for eight states, the Zambezi must be managed effectively to mitigate the effects on water supply of increased population, industrial and mining development, and greater irrigated food production.

Within the framework of the Special Initiative, UN agencies involved in the water sector are to compile information on all current or planned projects in the Zambezi basin area, for inclusion in a UN Environment Programme (UNEP) data base.

UNEP and SADC have developed a project for the equitable and sustainable use of shared water resources, which will be tested in a pilot project and sector studies in the Zambezi basin, and replicated in other water basins in the SADC region. The project hopes to result ultimately in a binding SADC agreement and in arrangements for avoiding and resolving disputes.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) are working on a project to rehabilitate and improve the network for monitoring water quality within the Zambezi basin, with data used to develop measures to control pollution. WMO also plans to use a satellite-based system to collect hydrometric data at selected sites in the upper part of the basin.

WMO has embarked on water resources assessment projects in shared river basins, aiming to establish consistent and reliable water data information systems for the benefit of sustainable development. A project with SADC is already under way which takes into account the Zambezi River Basin.

the Special Initiative will focus on:

- assessments of national and regional water policies, plans and programmes in the context of their economic viability, environmental sustainability and equity impacts;
- assistance in the development and application of guidelines for efforts aimed at the equitable access to and sustainable use of water resources; and
- development and implementation of integrated water management projects and programmes.

Clean water and sanitation

Improving household water security, especially drinking water supply and sanitation, is another critical objective of the Initiative. Activities in support of this goal will include relevant capacity-building programmes, as well as support to governments to improve water and sanitation services and enable greater access at the community level. Efforts will also be made to improve protection of water resources in drainage basins.

As an example of inter-agency collaboration, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank agreed in October to work together in assisting African countries in the development and implementation of water, environmental sanitation and hygiene education programmes in villages, small towns and poor urban neighbourhoods and in extending services to the poor.

Expanding assessments of the continent's water resources is a third objective of the Initiative's water component. This aims at improving the data necessary for making sound decisions on water resources. The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is involved within the framework of its World Hydrological Cycle Observing System (WHYCOS) – a worldwide programme to improve cooperation in the development of consistent and reliable water information systems – and the regional and subregional Hydrological Cycle Observing Systems (HYCOS).

WMO has begun work in the Zambezi River Basin, and has undertaken an appraisal of Ethiopia's capacity to assess its water resources and to provide services such as flood forecasts. Some of WMO's recommendations, including those concerning the rehabilitation of the observation and telecommunications network, have been endorsed by the government.

During a meeting in Djibouti in April, the directors of the Meteorological and Hydrological Services of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) countries in the Horn and East Africa discussed establishing a HYCOS for the IGAD region. WMO was requested to prepare the draft project profile, and efforts are under way to secure funding from the European Union. Uganda, another target country, will be involved in the IGAD-HYCOS as a member country of IGAD.

In Mali, WMO is executing a UNDP-funded project on meteorology and hydrology in support of agro-pastoral production and the protection of the environment. It has also prepared a project document with French funding to implement a HYCOS for the West and Central Africa regions. Mozambique, meanwhile, is participating in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) HYCOS project begun this year.

UN agencies in the Water Working Group, with bilateral agencies, regional organizations and the African Development Bank and other financial institutions, will use regional forums to mobilize resources for the Initiative's water component. They will encourage African and donor governments to facilitate preparation of relevant investment programmes. Non-governmental organizations, the private sector and academia also will be active participants in the Working Group's activities, particularly programme formulation, implementation and monitoring. ■

FAO promotes African food security

The UN System-wide Special Initiative on Africa has targeted land degradation and desertification control, soil quality improvement and food security with a special emphasis on women as key priorities within its food security component. The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has been designated the lead agency in these areas, and is also a cooperating agency in the Initiative's component on water for food security.

Within the framework of the Initiative, FAO is working to improve water management, given that future increases in African food production will have to come from higher yields generated by improved production systems.

FAO is supporting the modernization of existing infrastructure and the development of cost-effective measures for sustainable food and fodder production through the promotion of the use of ground water in the Gambia, Senegal and Sierra Leone and the protection of inland water bodies from sea water salinization. Activities are under way to promote cost-effective improvements in food and fodder production through small-scale irrigation in several countries. An assessment of wetland inventory and development potential is planned for all the countries of the West African sub-region and some countries of Central Africa and Southern Africa. Data gathered will assist in planning increased agricultural productivity of farms in the wetlands, as well as in identifying solutions for environmental protection.

Working with the UN Development Programme (UNDP), FAO is developing a household food security project in the Gambia. Particular attention will be given to the role of women, who account for 60 per cent of the agricultural labour force (and may be responsible for up to 80 per cent of total food production in many countries in sub-Saharan Africa).

FAO is finalizing the development of a training package, "Socio-Economic and Gender Analysis," aimed at strengthening national planning capacities to develop gender-sensitive agricultural programmes. Pilot activities have begun in Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire. The agency has also started working with national statistical institutions to improve the availability of agricultural statistical data broken down by gender.

Preliminary studies are also being undertaken to document efforts to increase women's access to land and FAO is working to increase their access to agricultural services, notably agricultural extension and rural credit. Farmer-to-farmer training materials are being developed, as well as functional adult education materials for numeracy and simple bookkeeping.

Yoweri Museveni: rebel with a cause

Uganda's President looks back on his life and his years as a guerrilla leader

By **Frehiwot Bekele**

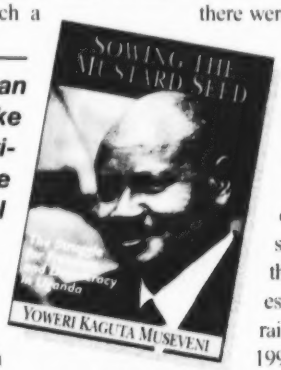
In his memoir, President Yoweri Museveni gives a vivid account of his life from early childhood until the presidential elections of 1996, focusing in large part on the tumultuous two-and-a-half decades leading up to his taking power in 1986.

We see Mr. Museveni growing up in the late 1940s as the oldest child of a cattle-raising nomadic family in south-western Uganda, then attending elementary school in Mbarara town (where his biggest challenge was battling hunger, as the school administration did not seem to appreciate the needs of its wards). We follow his progress to high school where the seeds of his political outlook are sown and where he meets like-minded friends, with whom he will later begin a movement to change the political order of Uganda. While at Dar es Salaam University in Tanzania in the late 1960s, he founds and chairs a Pan-Africanist student group, and meets such luminaries as writer and political activist Walter Rodney, Samora Machel, and Julius Nyerere. Graduation in 1970 lands him a job as research assistant in Ugandan President Milton Obote's office, which he holds until Idi Amin takes power in 1971.

The book moves swiftly to Mr. Museveni's political career and his central role in the struggle to oust President Idi Amin Dada's regime (1971-79), and, later, the guerrilla campaign under his leadership (1981-85) to unseat the second Obote regime which, Mr. Museveni says, usurped power by rigging the elections of 1980. Key events chronicled include President Amin's invasion of Tanzania in 1978 and Tanzania's counter-attack; the fall of Kampala to Tanzanian forces in 1979; the creation of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) by Mr. Museveni in 1981 and the ensuing armed struggle; and the brief rule of President Tito Okello.

Although filled with analysis of Uganda's colonial and post-colonial political realities, descriptions of military strategies, and enumerations of the prerequisites for a successful guerrilla campaign, the book, with its steady, no-nonsense, matter-of-fact tone, is not without its flashes of humour. The narrative abounds with descriptions of comic military fiascos, near disasters and false alarms; and the account of Mr. Museveni's courtship of his future wife, taking up all of two sentences, must be the tersest ever written on such a subject. The segment on his early childhood – with details on how he deduced the year of his birth, his relationship with his grandmother, his parents' experience with Christianity and his people's affectionate regard for their cattle – is also full of charm and warmth.

"Leadership, especially in an underdeveloped country like Uganda, is an endless sacrifice, unless one's purpose in seeking it is to steal public funds."



The book concludes with an account of the presidential elections of 1996, an exposition on multi-party politics in the African context, what is needed for Uganda's economic development, and for Africa's economic integration. It also details the challenges faced by the NRM on assuming power. In 1986, infrastructure was in a state of virtual collapse, and there were severe shortages of basic consumer goods. The economic growth rate was 2 per cent; inflation hovered around 240 per cent; and foreign exchange reserves were $254 mn in the red.

The adoption of free-market policies and macroeconomic measures such as the liberalization of prices and the stabilization of exchange and interest rates, says Mr. Museveni, helped raise economic growth to 10 per cent by 1995 and cut inflation to 5 per cent. However, Mr. Museveni admits to the continuing challenges of rural poverty and insurgencies in the north and north-east of the country (see below).

In the final chapter, Mr. Museveni reflects on political power in a developing country, which he sees as an endless personal sacrifice. After reading this narrative of his life, one is easily inclined to agree with his view. ■

Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda (Macmillan, London; 1997; 224 pp.)

Report details ordeal of northern Ugandan children

The Scars of Death: Children Abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army in Uganda, by Human Rights Watch (New York, 1997, 137 pp.)

This report chronicles atrocities committed against children of northern Uganda by a rebel group known as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). With a stated aim of overthrowing the government on behalf of the Acholi people of northern Uganda, but lacking broad support among the Acholi, the LRA abducts children to make up most of its "fighters," the report says. A similar study recently released by Amnesty International also details the LRA's abduction of up to 8,000 children over the last three years.

Numerous children, ranging in age from 10 to 17, who have managed to escape from the LRA, give harrowing accounts of their captivity in the Human Rights Watch report. After being abducted in Gulu or Kitgum district, the children are made to take part in the looting and pillaging of villages, the abduction of other children and the killing of those who attempt to escape. They are then made to march for days, without adequate rest or food, carrying heavy loads of arms or looted food, to LRA camps in southern Sudan. The report alleges that the Sudanese government provides the LRA with food, arms and shelter in exchange for fighting against the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), which, according to the report, is in turn aided by the Ugandan government. In addition to labouring as farmers, cooks and nurses, and, in the case of girls, serving as "wives" to LRA commanders, the children who survive are given rudimentary military training and are forced to form the front line and lead charges in battles against the Ugandan army and the SPLA. Many children perish in such battles.

The Scars of Death calls on the LRA and on the governments of Sudan and Uganda to do all they can to stop the abduction and killing of children. It also calls on the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict to investigate the actions of the LRA. Finally, it urges the international community to raise to 18 the minimum age for recruitment of soldiers.

— F.B.

AFRICA IN BRIEF

Japan's aid cuts to hit Africa and some UN agencies also

Japan's official development assistance (ODA) recovered this year after a sharp fall in 1996, but it is set to drop by 10 per cent in fiscal year 1998, with further cuts until 2001. The fall of the yen against the dollar could mean a 25 per cent cut in real terms. "I'm afraid Africa will become a major victim of our aid cuts," Mr. Morihisa Aoki, Japan's new ambassador for African conflicts, told the London *Financial Times*. Sub-Saharan Africa got 11.6 per cent of Japan's ODA last year. Aid will also "have to be much more selective," Mr. Aoki added.

The planned cuts follow an ODA policy review by a committee appointed by Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto. UN agencies may also be hit if the cuts are approved in December when Japan's Diet votes on the national budget.

Japan's attitude to humanitarian issues may be "questioned internationally," and other countries could also be "lured" into cutting their own contributions, warned Mrs. Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, in a letter she wrote in July to Mr. Hashimoto. "We keep hoping that the threatened cuts will not be carried out," added Mr. Manzoor Ahmed, head of the office Tokyo of UNICEF, which faces a cut of nearly 40 per cent in Japanese funding, Inter Press Service reports.

Japan is the world's biggest donor country in volume, but it is second to last among major donors in terms of ODA as a proportion of gross national product (GNP). Its ratio of ODA to GNP fell from 0.28 per cent in 1995 to 0.20 in 1996, the biggest decline among major donors. But this was still ahead of the US, which stayed in last place with a ratio of 0.12 per cent, up from 0.10 per cent in 1995.

In US dollar terms, Japanese ODA fell some 35 per cent in 1996 to $9.6 bn, but is projected to rise to about $13 bn this year. Reasons for the decrease last year include large repayments on ODA loans, cuts in multilateral aid and depreciation of the yen, says *The Reality of Aid, 1997-1998*, a major review of ODA by non-governmental organizations (NGOs). But with the biggest budget deficit among major donor countries, Japan has been reviewing all spending, including foreign aid. Defenders of foreign aid, including NGOs, are lobbying against the cuts, and the government itself says that aid, investment and trade are a "trinity" in accelerating progress in developing countries. ■

Foreign aid 'pulls in' private investment, World Bank says

At a time when the surge in private capital flows to emerging markets has strengthened the voice of critics of foreign aid, World Bank President James Wolfensohn has said that aid "pulls in private investment," spurs economic growth and reduces poverty. But poor countries must have "sound economic policies," he added at a mid-September symposium in Tokyo on "A new vision of development cooperation for the 21st century," jointly organized by Japan's Overseas Economic Cooperation Fund (OECF) and the Bank.

Foreign aid is even more important than in the past for most developing countries, said Mr. Joseph Stiglitz, the Bank's Senior Vice President and Chief Economist. Of the $244 bn in private investment flows to developing countries in 1996, World Bank research presented to the symposium shows that just 26 countries took in 95 per cent, while another 140 developing countries shared the remaining 5 per cent. Japanese and World Bank speakers pointed out that even in the main recipients of large capital flows, relatively little went to the key health and education sectors which underpin the economy.

Much of the massive aid that Japan received after World War II funded major infrastructure projects that were the "cornerstone of Japan's dazzling economic growth" in the 1960s, said OECF President Akira Nishigaki. While private sector-led infrastructure development has been important in many countries, Mr. Nishigaki said that "there are still many areas that call for development using public funds, with governments displaying initiative and leadership." ■

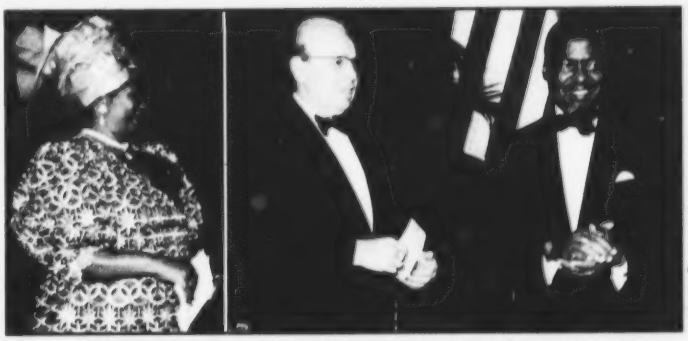
European Commission joins IMF in withholding aid to Kenya

The European Commission postponed a $90 mn loan to Kenya in September, pending

Hunger Project prizes for President Chissano and Joyce Banda

President Joaquim Chissano of Mozambique and Mrs. Joyce Banda, founder and executive director of the National Association of Business Women (NABW) in Malawi, have been awarded the 1997 Africa Prize for Leadership for the Sustainable End of Hunger by the Hunger Project, a New York-based non-governmental organization.

President Chissano was recognized for his role in ending one of Africa's longest and most devastating wars and for his government's efforts to promote economic recovery, particularly in agriculture and trade. Mrs. Banda was cited for helping many thousands of mostly rural women to become economically self-reliant through the NABW, which enables women to enter business by providing them with access to credit, information, markets and appropriate technology.



Fred Sher / The Hunger Project

Former UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar (centre) presented the 1997 Hunger Project awards to Mrs. Joyce Banda and President Joaquim Chissano.

Mozambique is rebuilding its social and economic infrastructure to help its people eradicate hunger, said President Chissano at a 20 October press conference at the UN in New York. But progress in agriculture has been slowed by the continuing problem of land-mines in roads and fields, he observed.

The removal of long-term government subsidies and a year of heavy rains has damaged Malawi's maize crop and increased foreign aid dependency, said Mrs. Banda. She commended Mozambique for having eased border restrictions, enabling Mozambican maize to get to Malawian markets.

guarantees that the money – earmarked for road repairs – would be used "properly." The postponement came just over six weeks after the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suspended a three-year $220 mn enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF) loan, accusing Kenya of failing to tackle corruption.

Commission spokesman João Vale de Almeida complained of Nairobi's poor record with human rights and democracy, as well as a general "lack of transparency." He said the funds will be released when the required assurances are received.

Kenya had already come under pressure in August when the World Bank warned that unless President Daniel arap Moi's government tackled corruption, it would substantially reduce its aid. Kenya had been relying on Bank funding to renovate its dilapidated road network and modernize the energy sector, which is struggling to meet demand.

The government responded to the IMF-World Bank criticism by committing itself to "expeditiously" address their concerns. It promised to take action on energy sector management, including legislation to provide for the reform of the sector and the establishment of an autonomous regulatory board. It also pledged to establish accountability in financial management and create an autonomous anti-corruption authority.

Since then Kenya, scheduled to hold presidential and legislative elections by the end of the year, has experienced unrest and violence. This has deepened the sense of political and economic crisis, resulting in high interest rates and instability of the Kenyan shilling, as well as a decline in the tourism industry. The country's highest single foreign exchange earner, tourism brings in about $400 mn dollars a year and employs some 150,000 people. After a two-year slump, the industry was expected to recover in 1997, but the recent political unrest has dashed these expectations. ■

Offshore discoveries boost Africa's potential oil output

Several recent oil discoveries indicate that the deep waters off West Africa's coast will be a major new source of oil in the next decade. With more discoveries in the offing, analysts say West Africa's deep-water oil reserves will climb to 20 bn barrels, with potential production of up to 1 mn barrels per day by 2005.

In August, the French company Elf Aquitaine announced a big discovery off the coast of Angola. Officials were optimistic that the "Dalia" field's potential would surpass that of the nearby "Girossol" field discovered last year. Girossol's proven reserves have been estimated at 500-700 mn barrels of relatively light crude oil, but this could rise to 1.5 bn barrels. The discovery of fields with 1 bn barrels or more is a rare occurrence.

Exploration has proved particularly fruitful off the Angolan coast, where over one-third of the regional total of exploratory "wildcat" wells have so far been drilled. The US company Chevron has confirmed a find of up to 1 bn barrels in the deep-water "Kuito" field, north of the Dalia field. Several large discoveries have also been made off the coast of Nigeria. ■

Africa is the subject of first UN Internet 'meeting'

In the last week of June, a group of African experts on financial management systems took part in the first UN "meeting" ever conducted on the Internet. For two hours a day over five days, eight experts in five African countries – Ghana, Ethiopia, Kenya, Swaziland and Uganda – sat at their computers and talked directly to each other on-line, in real time. They discussed ways to improve accountability and transparency in African financial management, reading background documents and other participants' contributions, and then typing in their own comments. It was "an historic and fabulous experience," said Mr. Singh Gurubacham, the Ugandan government's Audit Director.

Ms. Cheryl Larsen, at the UN Department for Economic and Social Affairs, organized and moderated the session from UN headquarters in New York. Not only did the session help advance the introduction of modern technology into UN practice, she notes, it also demonstrated the cost-savings possible from such technologies, largely by eliminating the need for travel. A meeting of this sort normally requires at least $60,000, but the on-line session cost just $8,000, an 85 per cent saving. Ms. Larsen, as well as the on-line participants, strongly recommended such sessions to other UN departments and agencies. The ease and low-cost of Internet meetings, she points out, "encourages South-South dialogue."

UNCTAD Trust Fund for LDCs over halfway to target

With Norway's recent contribution of $935,000 to the Trust Fund for least developed countries (LDC's), managed by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), total pledges and committments have reached $2.8 mn of the initial $5 mn target. Of the world's 48 LDCs, 33 are African.

The Trust Fund was set up in May 1996, and became operational last February. It aims to help LDCs integrate into the world economy through technical cooperation to strengthen export capacity.

Programmes may include support for trade policy changes and trade diversification, and for policy changes in the financial and fiscal sectors. Norway's contribution will help finance various UNCTAD programmes for LDCs, including debt management. ■

Across Africa, obsolete pesticides pose threat to health

There may be more than 20,000 tons of obsolete pesticides in Africa, says the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). And stocks are growing because the continent has no environmentally sound disposal facilities. FAO adds that donor countries, aid agencies, agrochemical companies and African governments are all responsible for the steady accumulation.

"Obsolete pesticide stocks pose a serious threat to public health and the environment," said FAO Agricultural Officer Alemayehu Wodageneh. "In many countries, pesticide containers are kept in the open, containers deteriorate and leak their contents... contaminating soil, water and groundwater. Most stores are in urban areas. Many of these chemicals are so toxic that a few grams could poison thousands of people."

In July FAO said it had disposed of some 370 tons of unused toxic pesticides from Zambia and the Seychelles, as part of a programme to help developing countries clean up this environmental hazard. Storage sites were cleaned and highly dangerous chemicals were shipped to Europe for incineration. Most were unused stocks donated through foreign aid programmes.

The removal cost $1.3 mn, and FAO got financial help from the Dutch government and the German Technical Cooperation Agency. FAO says it will need over $100 mn to dispose of all the obsolete pesticide stocks in Africa. It is currently seeking funding from agrochemical companies to remove 20 tons of dangerous chemicals from the Gambia, 300 tons from Senegal, and 200 tons from Botswana. ■

AFRICA WATCH

DEVELOPMENT AID

So much for the 'peace dividend'

Although global military spending has fallen by $500 bn in the 1987-95 period, development aid fell by 14 per cent in real terms in 1992-95, and by another 4.2 per cent in 1996, says *The Reality of Aid, 1997-1998 – An Independent Review of Development Cooperation*, recently published by Earthscan. Contributors to the publication include the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), EUROSTEP and ActionAid. Development aid "is at its lowest level since statistics began in 1950," amounting to just 0.25 per cent of the gross national product (GNP) of the world's 21 richest countries. In 1969, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), set the target of allocating 0.7 per cent of GNP to ODA. This was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in 1970. Last year, only four countries – Denmark, Norway, Netherlands and Sweden – reached and exceeded the target. ■

TRADE

European Parliament defends Lomé Convention against WTO

The European Parliament has urged the European Union to "use all legal means available" to protect the Lomé Convention from the World Trade Organization (WTO), reports Inter Press Service. The current Convention expires in 2000. It is the fourth in a series of accords between 70 African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) and the 15 European Union (EU) countries which give aid and preferential access to European markets.

While negotiations on the future of the Convention, first signed in 1975, will start in September 1998, the WTO has recently ruled that preferential access to EU markets for Caribbean bananas contravenes global rules of free trade. The European Commission, which is the secretariat of the EU, has recently acknowledged that such rulings by the WTO are incompatible with the Lomé Convention.

EUROSTEP, the non-governmental organization, in turn points out that the EU, with the United States, "played a central role" in the Uruguay Round of international trade negotiations which led to the creation of the WTO. According to EUROSTEP, international trade rules are "now widely perceived as detrimental to the poorest and least developed countries." ■

Otunnu appointed Special Representative for children

The United Nations took a significant step towards providing greater protection and rehabilitation for children who are victims of conflicts when Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced the appointment of the first UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict, Mr. Olara A. Otunnu. The appointment was recommended by the General Assembly when it considered a comprehensive report on the subject by Ms. Graça Machel of Mozambique in November last year.

UN / Eskinder Debebe

Secretary-General Kofi Annan introduces Mr. Olara Otunnu (right) at a press conference in October.

Introducing Mr. Otunnu to the press in October, Mr. Annan said his special representative would be building on Ms. Machel's pioneering work. Mr. Otunnu's mandate includes the promotion of measures for the protection of children in times of conflict and for their healing and reintegration in conflict's aftermath. He will also work to mobilize public opinion to ensure that the welfare of children affected by conflict is a priority on the international agenda.

Mr. Otunnu told journalists that he would act as a catalyst and focal point for the UN and other humanitarian agencies to ensure "concerted action to correct the abominable situation faced by children during and after armed conflict." He said he was committed to making the protection of children a common agenda for all nations regardless of their political, cultural or religious orientation.

The issue of children in conflict is "too important" to be confined to the councils of the United Nations. "I will seek to broaden this agenda and its ownership to build a wide community of concerned organizations and individuals well beyond the United Nations on this issue," he said.

Mr. Otunnu faces an enormous and challenging task. In the last 10 years, an estimated 2 million children have been killed in armed conflict, some 6 million have been seriously injured or permanently disabled and another 10 million have been psychologically traumatized. In the last two years, more than 250,000 children under the age of 18 have fought as soldiers in 36 conflicts across the world, particularly in Africa. Nearly 30 million children are refugees or internally displaced because of war.

Born in Uganda in September 1950 and now a national of Côte d'Ivoire, Mr. Otunnu, who is a lawyer by training, has been President of the New York-based International Peace Academy since 1990. He has held many other high-level positions, including Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uganda, Permanent Representative of Uganda to the UN and Chairman of the UN Commission on Human Rights. He has also served on the Commission on Global Governance, the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict and the Club of Rome.

Mr. Otunnu currently serves on the boards of several organizations, including the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, the Council of African Advisers of the World Bank, and the Advisory Committee of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

APPOINTMENTS

IAEA / P Pavlicek

__Mr. Mohamed ElBaradei__ of Egypt (right) has been appointed as the next Director-General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) by the Agency's Board of Governors and General Conference. His appointment takes effect in December 1997. Holding a rank of Ambassador in the Egyptian Foreign Service, Mr. ElBaradei is currently Assistant Director-General for External Affairs at the IAEA, where he has held senior positions since 1984.

Secretary-General Kofi Annan has appointed __Mr. David Stephen__ (United Kingdom) as Head of the UN Political Office for Somalia, currently located in Nairobi. At the time of his appointment, Mr. Stephen was Chief Speechwriter for the Secretary-General, and had previously served as Director of the UN Human Rights Verification Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA).